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**DIGITAL DEMOCRACY: HAS NEW DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
ALTERED THE AVAILABILITY OF INDEPENDENT
DOCUMENTARIES TO PBS STATIONS?**

By

Kathryn Larsen

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
with a concentration in Media Studies
The School of Arts and Sciences
Rhode Island College
May 2008**

Abstract

The mission of public television clearly states that its primary goal is to fulfill the needs of the community. One way to achieve this goal is by providing programming that encourages a dialogue and local participation.

Has the accessibility of more affordable digital production equipment and desktop video editing systems democratized the quantity and quality of independent documentaries submitted to PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) stations for broadcast? This question was examined from three perspectives: 1) the PBS station, 2) the independent filmmaker, and 3) the public television program distributor. PBS program and production personnel and independent producers responded to online surveys. I conducted in-depth interviews with four PBS station program managers and producers and four corresponding independent producers. I also interviewed Public television distribution personnel from two organizations. Upon analysis of the research data, three themes emerged—democracy, accessibility, and affordability. The relationship between the concept of radical democracy and public broadcasting of local productions was explored.

The results suggest that, while the PBS station personnel have seen an increase in the number of independent productions available to their stations, few make it a priority to cultivate relationships with local filmmakers. The independent producers acknowledge that new digital technology in editing and production equipment has made their filmmaking process easier, but report that access to PBS stations has not increased. A disconnect was revealed. Recommendations of best practices that could remedy this disconnect and help PBS stations fully realize their mission of providing programming for and by the local community conclude this study.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: A Brief History of Public Broadcasting and Digital Production and Editing Equipment from 1967 – 2007	5
Chapter 3: Connecting Public Television to a Radical Democracy	11
Chapter 4: Analysis of Surveys and Interviews	18
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations	30
Bibliography	38
Appendix A: PBS Mission, Funding and Technology Timeline	40
Appendix B: Mission Statements of Case Study PBS Stations	43
Appendix C: PBS Station Survey Results	44
Appendix D: Independent Filmmaker Survey Results	51
Appendix E: PBS Personnel Interview Questions	64
Appendix F: Independent Producer Interview Questions	66
Appendix G: Distribution Personnel Interview Questions	67
Appendix H: PBS Personnel, Independent Producer and Distribution Quotes	70
Appendix I: Rhode Island PBS Independent Producer Letter of Agreement	75a
Appendix G: RFP for <i>Here At Home, What Unites Us? What Divides Us?</i> 2006 Short Film Initiative	76

Chapter 1: Introduction

Public television, through its community-based programming and services, will be a unifying force in American culture, a lens through which we can understand our diverse nation and the world.

Public Broadcasting Service Vision Statement 2004

To achieve our goals as a public service provider, we collaborate with producers and our member stations to involve viewers in pursuits of the arts, education, and cultural, political and environmental awareness. PBS makes every effort to deliver media content that encourages viewers to become active participants in promoting change and shaping their communities, whether familial, local or global.

Public Broadcasting Service Mission Statement 2008

As the program manager at Rhode Island PBS for the last seven years, I noticed an increase in the number of local programs submitted to the station by independent producers¹. I wondered if other Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) stations were experiencing the same increase and what effect this had on achieving the mission of PBS. And does this increase of locally produced programs facilitate a more democratic dialogue?

Documentaries have long been a staple of PBS stations, but until 1999, they were limited in format and subject by the narrow group of filmmakers who could afford to produce them. In keeping with the aforementioned PBS mission statement of 2008, one of the questions this thesis will attempt to answer is whether or not the availability of more affordable digital production and editing equipment has increased the quantity and quality of documentaries. Another question is whether or not these changes in technology have made it possible for PBS stations to broadcast more documentaries that have a local subject matter and are relevant to the community. Lastly, has new digital technology created more opportunities for diverse voices that reflect the demographics of the community?

¹ Independent filmmaker, filmmaker and independent producer will be used interchangeably. Their preference is to be called a filmmaker.

One of the mandates of the PBS system is to be universally accessible. It is possible for just about every person in the United States to view a public television station for free, over the airwaves. PBS stations are noncommercial and are not censored by the government; education at the core of their mission. An aspect of the educational mission is to provide a public forum that engages and reflects the issues that are important to the local community. Providing local programs is one way to accomplish this mission. In order for these programs to expand the democratic project they must not only address the issues of the local community but also should be produced by a balanced representation of the demographics that make up the community. This will inherently expand the democratic project that is PBS.

This study examines the issue of changes in digital technology from three perspectives: 1) the PBS station, 2) the independent filmmaker, and 3) the public television program distributor. Two online surveys were conducted and analyzed to provide a snapshot of changes that have occurred in the quantity and quality of submissions to local PBS stations by independent filmmakers over the past five years. In-depth interviews with four program managers and producers from PBS stations and their corresponding independent producers provide case studies. Selected public television program distributors were also interviewed to provide their unique perspectives on the shifting relationships between independent producers and PBS stations.

In Chapter Two, a brief history of public television is outlined, including the evolution of the service, as well as the funding sources. In tandem with the historical outline of PBS, advances in production and editing equipment are highlighted. Prior to the mid-1990s, production and editing equipment were cumbersome, and expensive, and rarely available to individuals outside broadcast stations and production companies. It was the

advent of affordable digital video cameras and desktop non-linear editing (NLE) systems that shifted the authorship of programs. At the same time PBS stations faced funding shortfalls, and began seeking programs from other sources.

Chapter Three explores how access to new digital production and editing technologies relate to the theory of radical democracy.² Examined are ways in which the concepts of radical democracy, as a dialogic process are consistent (or not) with the mission and democratic project that PBS stations strive for through their programming. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe argue in their book Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics:

The discourse of radical democracy is no longer the discourse of the universal; the epistemological niche from which ‘universal’ classes and subjects spoke has been eradicated, and it has been replaced by a polyphony of voices, each of which constructs its own irreducible discursive identity. This point is decisive: there is no radical and plural democracy without renouncing the discourse of the universal and its implicit assumption of a privileged point of access to ‘the truth’, which can be reached only by a limited number of subjects. (191-192)

This study also examines Glenda R. Balas’ criticism of public television. In her 2003 book, Recovering a Public Vision for Public Television, she argues that the service is not achieving its mission, which is to provide the public with programming that meets the needs of their community.

Without a passion for public work by public television and the American people, public TV will continue to flounder on the sidelines. Its great potential to invigorate national discourse and to function as a principal player in America’s social, political and artistic quests will remain tragically unrealized. There is much at stake in the reformulation of a powerful purpose for public TV, including creating a protected space for robust public talk and decision-making. (12)

² For the purposes of this study, radical democracy is defined as a political system that is based upon freedom and equality and accepting of difference, dissent and antagonisms.

This study argues that Balas did not foresee the potential for new digital technology to make a difference by facilitating new voices that stimulate the conversation and advance the democratic project.

Chapter Four is an analysis of two online surveys conducted with independent filmmakers and PBS station personnel and interviews that were conducted with PBS station personnel, independent producers (who were recommended by the station personnel), and public television distribution personnel. The survey for PBS stations personnel was submitted to all the stations across the country but the survey for independent producers targeted only to those who had worked with PBS stations. The analysis provides further depth in exploring the thesis question.

In Chapter Five, conclusions are presented on whether or not new digital technology has had an impact on PBS stations' abilities to meet their mission statements and provide more programming that expands the democratic project. Best practices are recommended. It is suggested that if stations make it a priority to work with local independent producers in their communities, it will be a critical key to fulfilling the mission of PBS.

Chapter 2: A Brief History of Public Broadcasting and Digital Production and Editing Equipment from 1967 – 2007

In this chapter, I present a timeline (see Appendix A) that correlates the history of public television, as well as its mission and funding—with the progression of digital technology in production and editing equipment.

Public broadcasting began in the United States with a noncommercial educational mission. Educators realized early on that it was critical to reserve channels for noncommercial purposes. Not surprisingly, the majority of these licenses were affiliated with universities and school districts. In 1959, National Educational Television (NET) and Radio Center established a national identity, NETRC, and regional public networks began to emerge. Initially, the networks were dependent upon foundations for funding, in particular the Ford Foundation. In 1962, the first direct federal support was allocated to stations; this allocation was only for equipment and not for operations.

In 1967, the Public Broadcasting Act was responsible for creating the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). As stated in Roselle Kovitz and John Witherspoon's A History of Public Broadcasting:

Congress assigned CPB to help develop an educational broadcasting system in which programs of high quality, obtained from diverse sources, will be made available to noncommercial educational television or radio broadcast stations, with strict adherence to objectivity and balance in all programs or series of programs of controversial nature. (20)

Of particular interest to this study are the democratic mandates for diversity, objectivity, and balance. CPB would receive federal money and disperse it to local noncommercial stations. The first federal appropriation for the organization was \$5 million.

Two years later, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) replaced NET, with the mission to interconnect public television stations and disseminate programs to stations (soon to be known as PBS stations). Public broadcasters created PBS to pool their money to fund programming and to efficiently deliver programs to what would become over 350 stations across the country. PBS stations were operated by non-profit organizations, state agencies, local authorities (e.g., municipal boards of education), or universities in their communities of license. In some states, PBS stations throughout the entire state were organized into a single regional “subnetwork” (e.g., Georgia Public Broadcasting). Programming was limited and stations relied on one other to share what they produced.

As this infrastructure was developing, broadcast television technology was moving along, but at a slower pace. In 1967, the first portable broadcast recorder that could record 20 minutes of picture and sound on tape went on the market for \$65,000 and weighed approximately 50 pounds. There was no videotape editing system in operation at this time. When editing was necessary, broadcasters would transfer the video to film and edit the film.

In 1972, PBS President Hartford Gunn proposed the Station Program Cooperative to shield funding choices from political interference. Stations would collectively vote on which programs PBS would fund. Funding continued to be an issue for PBS stations, and during that year, President Nixon vetoed the law that would authorize funding the CPB for two years. A reduced one-year bill was enacted later in the amount of \$48 million.

Funding, programming costs, and maintaining objectivity continued to challenge PBS stations to meet their mission of providing their viewers with programs that were not influenced by commercial entities and that represented diverse points of view.

At this time, Fernseh introduced a new hand-held camera that only weighed 15 pounds, but cost between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The first non-linear editing (NLE) system, the CMX-600, was introduced by CMX Systems, a joint venture between CBS and Memorex. The system held 25 minutes of disc time and cost \$500,000.

In 1988, a new documentary series was launched (and is still in production today). *P.O.V.* is an anthology series that showcases independent films and is produced by American Documentary, Inc., “a leading nonprofit media organization dedicated to creating, identifying, and presenting contemporary nonfiction stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media” (www.amdoc.org). During the same year, Congress directed CPB to create a separate service to aid independent producers, a mandate that would take three years to actualize. The federal appropriation increased to \$225 million.

Simultaneously, the large television stations, PBS as well as commercial, began transferring their operations to digital video. Digital recorders cost \$75,000 each, character generators were \$15,000 - \$50,000, and a complete video editing suite cost well over \$250,000. In 1989, AVID launched the Media Composer, an off-line NLE system that revolutionized video and film editing, and quickly became the dominant NLE platform. It originally cost \$130,000.

In 1991, in response to the congressional mandate of 1988, the Independent Television Service (ITVS) was created with an appropriation of \$6 million.

ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. (www.itvs.org)

At that time, Independent producers were still shooting primarily on film, transferring to videotape, editing on NLE equipment and then dubbing back onto film. Very few owned their own equipment, so they had to rent cameras and editing equipment as well as hire production personnel. Smaller PBS stations could not afford expensive equipment to produce their own local documentaries and relied heavily on the largest PBS stations (WNET/Thirteen in New York, NY; WGBH in Boston, MA, and WETA in Washington, D.C.) to provide them with documentary programming. The larger stations, like KQED in San Francisco, CA, were able to produce their own local programming and cultivated strong relationships with their independent filmmaking community.

In 1994, Republicans had the majority in the House, and Speaker Newt Gingrich announced a plan to “zero out” CPB funding. Stations rallied their communities and the cuts were defeated. The federal appropriation for that year was \$275 million. The following year, AVID released their disc-based camera, the Camcutter but it still cost \$19,000 and a basic NLE editing system remained well over \$100,000. The following year, the IEEE 1394 FireWire standard was adopted and it was possible to capture digital video and images from a camera or tape deck directly into a NLE system.

Gradually, the cost of shooting and editing video decreased. Desktop video editing became affordable. In 1999, Panasonic put a pro-consumer video camera on the market for \$4,000. In the same year, Apple Inc. launched an NLE software system, Final Cut Pro. It targeted consumers and cost \$999, with the computer hardware platform costing from \$2,000-\$3,000. The initial version of Final Cut Pro did not quite meet broadcast standards, but by 2001, release version 3.0 did. Over the next few years, Final Cut Pro software continued to improve while the cost remained relatively the same. In 2006, Apple Inc.

released Final Cut Pro Studio, which supported high definition and enabled the user to create more sophisticated audio, text, and video effects. The software cost was \$1,299. AVID countered with its own compact editing system, Express Pro, for \$4,995 (software and hardware were bundled).

An important mandate for public television has always been to provide free, over the airwaves, noncommercial programming to as many people in the country as possible. By 1974, there were 238 stations. By 1996, 356 stations covered 99% of the United States. These 356 stations are operated by 174 noncommercial licensees or authorities. There are four types of licensees or authorities: 89 are community, 7 are local (e.g. municipal or school districts), 20 are state government, and 58 are college or university.

There are markets that have more than one PBS station. For example, in Los Angeles, CA there is the community license, KCET, while KLCS is licensed to the Los Angeles Unified School District. Their operating budgets are vastly different, even though they are both in the second largest market in the country. Inequality between and among stations is not just based on the size of the market they serve, but also in the operating budgets they have. Costs for production and editing equipment are the same for stations with multi-million dollar budget as they are for those stations with operating budget of a million dollars or less. There was and still is a funding inequality among stations.

Over the course of the past forty-eight years, the mission of public television has not changed significantly, while the funding sources have shifted, increased and then decreased, making it difficult to carry out the mandates of diversity, objectivity, and balance on a local level. In the past decade, the cost of locally produced independent programming of broadcast quality for PBS stations has decreased quite significantly.

On the other hand, since its inception, ITVS has provided production and communication support (more than \$100 million) for more than 700 programs produced by independent producers, some in partnership with PBS stations. In 2003, Balas did not see ITVS as an important vehicle for providing programming to the PBS national schedule; her only comment on the organization was that, “It was a rare source of television programs dedicated to preserving and enlarging the public sphere” (26).

Some questions arise:

1. Has there been an increase in locally produced independent programming?
2. Have the demographic profiles of the producers shifted to represent the diversity of the American population?
3. Have the new, affordable digital technologies made it possible to fully realize the mission of public television as an extension of the democratic project?

The next chapter examines the public television mission as it relates to democracy

Chapter 3: Connecting Public Television to a Radical Democracy

From the beginning, PBS stations have produced and acquired programs that satisfy their mission to provide an open forum for ideas and subjects of interest to their community. An important aspect of this mission is being able to broadcast programs from a variety of voices and visions. Local stations continually search for programming that is not influenced by funding sources or a particular political agenda. Unlike commercial network television stations, the decision of when and what programs to schedule is made at the local PBS station rather than by a network executive. The choice of programming is based on what will appeal to the viewers in the local community, and not by advertising or a national network. As stated in a 2004 study, Ten Viewer-Based Principles to Guide the Development of a Primetime Programming Strategy for Public Television, commissioned by the CPB:

By contrast, public television—in its commitment to non-commercialism—signals respect for its audience and engenders their trust by avoiding even the appearance of pandering. By virtue of membership in public television, moreover, some viewers actually feel they are “owners” or “stockholders” in the station and that they “have a voice.” They trust that stations have their interests at heart rather than the profits of a corporation. (1)

PBS station missions state that scheduling programs that are relevant to their local communities is important. For example, the mission statements for KQED, Community Idea Stations (WCVE), Rhode Island PBS (WSBE), Nashville Public Television (WNPT), and KCPT (see Appendix B) all reflect community issues and/or civic involvement. They all stipulate that non-commercial television’s mandate is to use its airwaves to provide programming that furthers its local civic involvement and fosters education. The local station mission statements are consistent with the 2004 PBS vision statement, “Public television, through its community-based programming and services, will be a unifying force

in American culture, a lens through which we can understand our diverse nation and the world” (www.pbs.org). They are also consistent with the CPB statement,

The fundamental purpose of public telecommunications is to provide programs and services, which inform, enlighten and enrich the public. While these programs and services are provided to enhance the knowledge, and citizenship, and inspire the imagination of all Americans, the Corporation has particular responsibility to encourage the development of programming that involves creative risks and that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities. (www.cpb.org)

This vision mandates a system concerned not only with what interests the majority, but also recognizes that what interests the minority is just as valid. This means that programs will air on PBS stations that may not appeal to a large audience. It is part of each station’s mission to provide programs that serve citizens in its community, hence with programming that may not be of interest to the rest of the country.

The concept of radical democracy (as defined in Chapter One) provides a theoretical framework for this study. Specifically, Chantal Mouffe’s vision of the democratic dialogic informs this study. Ernesto Laclau and Mouffe argue in their book Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics:

The discourse of radical democracy is no longer the discourse of the universal; the epistemological niche from which ‘universal’ classes and subjects spoke has been eradicated, and it has been replaced by a polyphony of voices, each of which constructs its own irreducible discursive identity. This point is decisive: there is no radical and plural democracy without renouncing the discourse of the universal and its implicit assumption of a privileged point of access to ‘the truth’, which can be reached only by a limited number of subjects. (191-192)

PBS, CPB, and stations strive to provide programming that is inclusive of many points of view. One of the ways to accomplish this is to diversify who produces the programs. Each PBS station receives funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and then contributes part of its overall station budget to the production and operation of national

programs. Until the 1990s, the majority of programs were produced by only a handful of stations in the major markets. When CPB created ITVS, the pool of producers bringing programs to PBS stations was expanded and diversified, because independent producers had a mechanism to partner with stations to obtain funding for their projects.

By creating ITVS, CPB encouraged independent producers to submit their programs to PBS stations. Theorist Mouffe in her book The Democratic Paradox states:

The alternative to state action is a 'generative' politics that provides a framework for the life-political decisions of the individual and allows people to make things happen themselves. Democracy should become 'dialogic', and far from being limited to the political sphere, it has to reach the various areas of personal life, aiming at a 'democracy of the emotions'. This new 'life' politics overcomes the traditional left/right divide, since it draws on philosophic conservatism while preserving some of the core values usually associated with socialism. (109)

The partnership that ITVS encouraged between independent filmmakers and PBS stations allowed the "individual" (independent filmmaker)... "to make things happen" and expanded on the traditional nature of the PBS stations. The emergence of ITVS into the PBS system helped further the democratization of programs on local PBS stations. The number of independent producers that were producing programs for public television increased. To date, ITVS has provided production and communication support for over 700 programs produced by independent producers. Through these independent producers, stations that historically had been strapped for funding could establish a tie to the local community, and provide local programs to stations. One of the ways ITVS accomplished this was through its LINCS grant. These grants give independent producers and public television stations an opportunity to form full production and presentation partnerships. By providing matching funds to partnerships, ITVS acts as a catalyst, helping independent producers leverage the support of stations and helping stations access the talent of independent producers, creating

programs that speak to their communities. A requirement of the LINCS grant program is that an independent producer must partner with a PBS station on a film.

For example, *Crank*, a program about a methamphetamine addiction epidemic in a Tennessee town, received a LINCS grant from ITVS in 2005. The partnering station, WCTE in Cookeville, TN, a very small PBS station, does not have the resources to produce full-length documentaries. So, the partnership with the local producer allowed the station to broadcast a program that was enormously important to their viewing area.

Another example is, *The Great Pink Scare*, a documentary about the persecution that followed, when three Smith College professors were charged with the possession and distribution of obscene literature. They were tried in Northampton District Court and eventually convicted of felony charges. The subject of the persecution of gay men was of national interest but also provided the local PBS station, WGBY, with the ability to open a dialogue in their community about the acceptance of homosexuals. The LINCS funding initiative was a way to increase diversity of local programming. Both of these stations benefited from the relationship with the independent producer and subsequently strengthened their ties to the community.

PBS stations are organized along a democratic process. Each station is autonomous, but is a member of the larger national organization as well. National production decisions are made by the national organizations (CPB and PBS) with input from stations. The production of national programs is based on what will appeal to all the PBS station audiences. In addition, the airing of independent programs from a wide variety of sources correlates with Mouffe's radical democracy framework. She maintains multiple points of view enhance the democratic dialogic. Mouffe sees citizenship as an important part of

democracy. PBS stations are also concerned with citizenship; a part of the mission of PBS stations is to provide viewers with programs that are unique to the local community. In her chapter “Democratic Citizenship and the Political Community” from Dimensions of Radical Democracy, Mouffe sees citizenship this way:

To make possible a hegemony of the democratic forces, new identities are therefore required, and I am arguing here in favour of a common political identity as a radical democratic citizens. By that I understand a collective identification with a radical democratic interpretation of the principles of the liberal-democratic regime: liberty and equality. Such an interpretation presupposes that those principles are understood in a way that takes account of the different social relations and subject positions in which they are relevant: gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. (236)

Just as Mouffe sees the definition of citizenship as ever changing so is the possibility PBS stations have to fulfill their mission of providing their viewers with programming that will enlighten and stimulate dialogue. Instead of a relatively small number of people producing programs for PBS stations, new technology has the potential to increase the scope of subjects and the demographic profile of producers.

Viewers and members have always played an integral part in the success or failure of PBS. Each station takes its relationship with its viewers very seriously. Viewer feedback on which programs they like and don't like is analyzed and responded to by each station. The financial structure of PBS stations relies heavily on viewers becoming members of their local station. For example, I frequently receive calls and e-mails from viewers requesting programs. It is not unusual for me to make scheduling decisions based on these requests. My experience is not unique; stations schedule programs based on the feedback their members and viewers provide in letters, phone calls, and e-mails. PBS viewers have a sense of ownership in their local public television station. This is not by accident, PBS stations' feel their mission is to establish, maintain, and expand public engagement, vigorously

cultivate this sense of ownership, and establish an emotional connection between the public and their local PBS station. Many stations actively solicit feedback from their viewers and change the programming to reflect those expressed wishes. Stations convene community advisory groups to advise the station about community needs and interests, and what programming might fit those needs. Some stations, mine included, organize special niche interest groups—fans of British comedies—to meet and recommend different series to put into the schedule. CPB has conducted extensive studies with viewers of PBS to find out when and why they watch their local station. Invariably, the results indicate that respondents appreciate PBS programming that is intelligent, substantial and, challenging, as well as the quality and diversity of programming. As the study, Ten Viewer-Based Principles to Guide the Development of a Primetime Programming Strategy for Public Television, states:

Such high intellectual standards, of course, may be intimidating to some. Yet many viewers also found that the high-powered intellectual content was expressed in ways that were “comprehensive to the non-expert,” without ever condescending or “insulting my intelligence.” (4)

This echoes an argument Mouffe puts forth, that a non-exclusive participation in democracy protects the ideal of democracy. She explains in The Democratic Paradox:

Contrary to other projects of radical participatory democracy informed by rationalistic framework, radical and plural democracy rejects the very possibility of a non-exclusive public sphere of rational argument where a non-coercive consensus could be attained. By showing that such a consensus is a *conceptual* impossibility, it does not put in jeopardy the democratic ideal, as some would argue. On the contrary, it protects pluralist democracy against any attempts at closure. Indeed, such a rejection constitutes an important guarantee that the dynamics of the democratic process will be kept alive. (33)

Mouffe advocates a non-exclusive public sphere that the independent producers fulfill, while the stations provide the open forum for the producers’ work. This open forum directly relates to the independent producers’ ability to gain access to their local PBS station. By definition

independent producers are less likely to be influenced by corporate and institutional constraints. Local PBS stations have always been mandated to provide programming that engages their community.

Glenda Balas in her book Recovering a Public Vision for Public Television is not as optimistic about public television living up to its mission. As she says,

While stations compete for limited resources and worry about drops in audience ratings, public TV's institutional identity hangs in the balance. Mired in the struggles of the day-to-day and lacking a clear and precise mission that sets it apart, public broadcasting flounders, and its potential to invigorate public dialogue is slipping away. Given the internal will, public TV could enable the discourses of tolerance, media criticism and democracy. It could give underserved audiences an outlet for public speech and performance and serve as a springboard for citizen activism. (19-20)

I'm not as pessimistic. What follows is a snapshot of public television within this democratic dialogue.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Surveys and Interviews

This chapter is an analysis of online surveys and interviews of PBS station personnel, independent producers and PBS distribution personnel. The survey for PBS stations was conducted as a way to discover whether changes may or may not have occurred in the quantity and technical quality of program submissions to local PBS stations by independent producers over the past five years. Another survey targeted independent producers to obtain their point-of-view on whether or not new digital technology had an impact on their relationship with the local PBS station over the past five years. I chose five years because it was approximately five years ago that desktop non-linear editing became more affordable. Two online surveys (see Appendix C and D for surveys and detailed results) were conducted, one with PBS stations and one with independent producers. The questions were kept to a minimum, with the hope that more participants would fill them out. The PBS survey had nine questions and the independent producer survey had ten questions. Each of the surveys asked general questions about the participant's background and more specific questions about the use of digital technology and whether or not this technology had changed the relationship between PBS and independent producers. Each of the surveys also asked open-ended questions to get a broader understanding of the respondent's point-of-view on the changes that have or have not occurred over the last five years.

The public television survey was sent by individual e-mails to 134 PBS program and production executives, representing 168 CPB-qualified noncommercial television licensees. (There are currently three organizations that program multiple stations and several state licensees with multiple stations, hence the difference in numbers.) Fifty-four people

responded to the survey, representing a 40% response rate. According to a study by Kim Sheehan from the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon e-mail surveys have an average 31% response rate.

A list of eighty-two independent producers' e-mail addresses was obtained from Independent Television Service (ITVS). A total of forty-three filmmakers, representing 53%, responded to the survey. The criteria for this list was that the filmmaker had submitted a Linking Independents and Co-producing Stations (LINCS) grant proposal to ITVS in the past five years.

In the interest of examining the thesis questions more deeply from multiple perspectives, three PBS program managers and one PBS station producer were selected who, in turn, recommended local filmmakers for phone or e-mail interviews. Public television program distribution personnel were also interviewed for their perspective. The objective was to get their respective points-of-view on how the relationship between independent producers and stations has changed over the last five years with regard to new digital technology in production and editing equipment, and to determine whether or not new digital technologies have furthered the democratic dialogic at local PBS stations.

A set of questions was constructed for each of the groups (see Appendix E, F and G), the PBS personnel, independent producers and distribution personnel.

The people interviewed were:

Rachel Raney, the executive producer for *Truly California*, KQED/San Francisco's local anthology series showcasing films by and about California. She recommended Will Parinello, a local San Francisco filmmaker with whom she has worked for a number of years and who has produced programs for PBS and other entities for more than 20 years.

John Felton, vice president and general manager for WCVE/Richmond, VA. He recommended I speak to Bill Reiffenberger, a local independent producer from Crozet, VA, who has worked with the station and other PBS stations for a number of years.

Michael Murphy, vice president of programming for KCPT/Kansas City, MO. He recommended Terence O'Malley, Esquire who is director of program support at Fidelity Security Life Insurance Company in Kansas City, MO. He is not a full time filmmaker but had a film shown on KCPT last year and is currently working on a new project that he hopes to have broadcast on KCPT and other PBS stations across the country.

Kevin Crane, vice president of programming and technology at WNPT/Nashville, TN. He recommended Kathy Conkwright, a former staff member at WNPT who is now an independent producer. She has produced documentaries for her local PBS station as well as nationally.

Mary Ann Thyken, director of production and Robbi Fahey, production consultant for Independent Television Service (ITVS) in San Francisco. ITVS was established by a historic congressional mandate in 1988 to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences.

Gayle Loeber, director of programming at National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA), a national company that distributes programs to PBS stations.

See Appendix H for selected quotes from the interviews, categorized by the three themes that emerged: democracy, accessibility, and affordability.

The objective of this thesis was to determine if new digital technology in production and editing had changed the working relationship between independent producers and public

television. If so, how? Did the technology changes create opportunities for a wider range of voices and visions to be shown on PBS stations?

The online survey of PBS stations shows that the majority of those that responded believe that there has been an increase (78%) in the amount of locally produced documentaries available for local airing and, of these respondents, 80% said the increase is a direct correlation to the new digital technology. Of the 80% who saw a direct correlation, 85% said that both desktop editing equipment and affordable broadcast quality camera equipment had the most impact. A smaller percentage (15%) answered that desktop editing equipment *alone* had the most impact. No one answered that affordable broadcast quality camera equipment *alone* had the most impact. This verifies that in the large majority of cases, there has been an increase in local productions available to PBS stations and the increase is attributable to new digital technology in production and editing equipment. A small percentage (13%) indicated they did not know if the increase in local productions was due to digital media technologies. It is probable that those respondents were unsure what technology was used to produce submitted programs.

Interestingly, 22% of stations that responded said they have not seen an increase in the number of local productions submitted. Perhaps one reason for stations not experiencing an increase in locally produced documentaries is that their station has not made it a priority to seek out independent producers, or they prohibit filmmakers' access to the station facilities. Half of those responding that had not seen an increase also indicated that no one at the station had made a conscious effort to cultivate local producers in their market.

There is a different perception from the independent producers. When asked what the greatest stumbling block is in gaining access to PBS stations, they overwhelming replied:

“non-responsiveness of the station staff” (86%). Based on the responses from independent producers and PBS stations, there is a disconnect in the perceived accessibility to PBS stations. Kathy Conkwright in her interview saw the roadblocks to getting her documentaries on PBS stations were funding and connections to the decision makers—an inability to get station personnel to see her film. In the survey, an independent producer from Austin, TX lists the following problems:

Non-responsiveness of programmers. Sufficient funding to make work.
Narrow scope of program preferences by programmers. Poor understanding of local stations about how to develop local audiences for local work (though some progress gets made). "PBS mindset" about who their audience is, who it can be, and what kind of programs they are interested in.

While the online survey does show that the majority of stations (74%) who responded say they pursue independent producers in their market, they do so passively. When asked how they cultivate these producers the most frequent answer was “by asking for local programs either by broadcast or on the web.” In my opinion, this indicates that most stations are not making it a proactive priority to cultivate local independent producers. This passivity is supported by the comments made on the survey when asked how they cultivate relationships with local producers. Some examples are: From KVIE, Sacramento, CA “Viewing the programs they send to us and deciding if we can use them or not.” And from Arkansas ETV, “Just answered the phone! They call all the time now.” By not actively seeking local productions from the community stations are not cultivating long-term relationships. One might ask if this passive approach limits the democratic dialogic.

On the other hand Community Idea Stations provides an example of best practices in working with independent producers. They have an *Independent Producers’ Manual* detailing what is expected from the local filmmaker and what the station can provide.

Community Idea Stations demonstrates that station policies that embrace localism can be successful. They achieved this goal by establishing partnerships with filmmakers in their local community and have attracted corporations and other community members to finance these programs. The station has decided to use Final Cut Pro as their editing software because it matches what the independent producers are using. In my opinion this is win-win-win situation for local producers, the station, and the PBS audience.

Based on my experience at Rhode Island PBS, it requires a significant amount of time and resources to establish a vibrant working relationship with local independent producers (I spend about 10% of my time working on local programs). I have made a concentrated effort to reach out to these filmmakers, but it has taken time. One successful tactic I employed was to establish partnerships with the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, the Rhode Island International Film Festival, and the film and television departments at all the state colleges and universities. These partnerships represent a “pipeline” to a larger number of independent producers. The amount of time spent with each independent filmmaker has varied. Sometimes, all that is needed is a letter of agreement (see sample in Appendix F) and the producer’s delivery of the program in a broadcast format. Other independent producers require considerable handholding, with multiple phone calls and meetings to discuss the film content and technical quality. Audio and video must meet PBS broadcast standards. Frequently, the independent producer must correct these production quality issues.

The survey of PBS station personnel supported what I have experienced at Rhode Island PBS. Many saw the technical issues as the largest barrier to accepting local productions (80%). In addition to “poor production values,” the PBS station WTIU in Bloomington, IN sees “sub-standard technical quality as a problem. Bad audio and video

levels, no closed captioning, running times don't meet anything close to a standard length, etc. Too often, 'producers' come to us after their project is finished – rather than while in development, and there is nothing that can be done with their 'masterpiece'." This points to the importance of establishing relationships with filmmakers before they have finished their films. Independent producers need clear guidelines as to broadcast quality standards and station policies.

Though not as high as technical issues, PBS stations (22%) indicated that content was problematic. Some stations try to work with independent producers to fix these problems; sometimes the filmmaker refuses. Case in point, WGTE in Toledo, OH respondent stated,

Main hurdle is working with the producers to make changes to their work that I feel will enhance the work's message, quality, strength, etc. I would never request a change for editorial reasons, only to enhance the quality of the work. Sometimes filmmakers (especially the young idealists) refuse those changes. The result of which is loss of broadcast opportunity.

These problems also manifest as subject matter and/or language issues. If language is not suitable for broadcast, then the independent producer is asked to re-edit the program. If the issue is about subject matter, it rarely works out that the film can be seen on public television. The FCC Commission Policy Concerning the Noncommercial Nature of Educational Stations prohibit PBS stations from broadcasting commercials. The Public Broadcasting Act of 1957 mandates stations maintain objectivity and balance in programs or series. This does not mean the program itself must be balanced but that the station has an obligation to broadcast another program that provides the counterpoint. This is a burden that not every program manager will, or can take on. As Kevin Crane, from WNPT in Nashville, TN explained in his interview:

I have rejected a number of documentaries that so clearly push an agenda that I did not feel comfortable airing them without a balancing program. In each of these cases, the bias came through the shaky production values loud and clear, so much so that I did not feel comfortable being responsible for putting them in our schedule. That is not to say that we will not air a program that takes a position on a subject; just that the combination of poor production values and “table pounding” tilt a program into the “no thanks” category.

A copyright/release issue was another significant reason (69%) responding stations were not able to accept films. Some inexperienced filmmakers are not aware that they must secure permission to use film material that was not created by them personally³. Original footage of interviews and/or images of people on camera must be accompanied by signed release forms. Even something as innocent as filming an interview with a television program on in the background is problematic.

I have coached a few producers who have never created a program before. Case in point is a filmmaker I have been working with for three years on a children’s science series. The first program she sent to me was poorly shot and edited. She was a non-professional attempting to create her own series with her own equipment. With guidance and encouragement, she has improved greatly and is now seeking funding on a national level for a second season.

Michael Murphy from KCPT in Kansas City, MO sees that digital technology has had a positive influence in his market. “It’s opened up the platform to more voices. More people whom are pursuing making programs, making documentaries, making statements, who maybe never would have access to making a film or even have thought of it.”

³ Music is an exception. PBS stations have a blanket license, paid for by CPB, for music rights.

Over 50% of the independent producers who responded to the online survey said that the purchase of new production and editing equipment had increased their access to PBS stations. Comments from those who disagreed, explained the challenges the new technology has created. For example, an independent producer from Orange County, CA wrote:

Yes and no. The cheapness of the equipment has allowed me to go ahead and make my films. Or at least get to the point of a pitch tape to get into the door. But digital equipment is also increasing competition, and also raising the bar—many funders now expect a fully fleshed out pitch tape, essentially pushing more and more development and even production costs onto independent producers.

As this filmmaker points out, new digital technology has made making films easier but it has also increased the level of competition. The amount of air time available and the pool of funders has not substantially changed in the last five years and yet the number of films being submitted has increased—bad news for filmmakers, good news for PBS stations.

The independent producers, both in the survey and the interviews, expressed a need for more airtime for independent productions. The number of hours dedicated to documentaries by independent filmmakers has increased in the last five years, but in their opinion, there still isn't enough time allotted to local productions. Mary Ann Thyken at ITVS, provided a possible reason for this perception. It is an interesting disconnect. She said in her interview, "The problem for us is trying to persuade them to take their film to PBS because they are not viewers of PBS so they don't think of us."

I have experienced this problem at Rhode Island PBS. I hear about a locally produced film that is screening at a local cinema or film festival and I pursue broadcasting the film on Rhode Island PBS. In a number of cases the response is "No thanks, PBS is not for me." They do not see the value of having their film on PBS partly because they are not

viewers of the station. There are stations where this attitude is not held. One is KVCR, in San Bernardino, CA. When asked whether or not he solicited independent producers, the program manager stated, “They come in droves directly to me. I’m way overloaded. Just outside of LA where nobody speaks to up-and-comers, they all try the local PBS station.” Thus a competitive marketplace for filmmakers stimulates interest in PBS as a broadcast outlet. I have witnessed this phenomenon from another perspective because of our proximity to Boston. WGBH in Boston, MA, does not have the personnel or infrastructure to handle many independent producers unless they come supported by a large budget. So, I receive many inquiries from Boston producers asking if I would consider their program. In my conversations with other program managers across the country, there is greater quantity and quality of local films being offered to stations in larger urban areas like Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Chicago and Boston, where independent filmmaking communities are bigger.

Mary Ann Thyken at ITVS sees it in a slightly different light:

I was hoping the cheaper production and editing equipment would allow people to make lower priced films. On some level they can, they can turn around projects more efficiently. It has democratized it on some level. You don’t have to live in a big town to be able to work on projects.

Her experience with independent producers shows that while the advent of new digital technologies may not have lowered the cost, it has opened up opportunities for a wider range of independent producers to create films. John Felton from Community Idea Stations in Richmond, VA has experienced this in his market.

I think the doors have opened to all demographic areas. We’re thrilled given the fact that Richmond, while we are the 60th largest media market overall; we are the 10th largest media market in America for African-American population. As a result we have seen great support from the African-American community. We are offering

independent programs by independent producers to all of Public Television this fall, which include a program on African-American Alzheimer issues and African-American trailblazers. These are independent producers that live and work right here in our own community.

This demonstrates that it is possible to cultivate an active local independent producer relationship that benefits the local station as well as other PBS stations across the country. In her interview, Kathy Conkwright, a producer in Nashville, TN provided this insight into the impact independent producers can have on citizens:

I believe strongly that everyone has a story to tell and I greatly enjoy giving voice to those that are not often heard in mainstream media and society. I believe for a strong informed citizenry, it is extremely helpful to understand and have knowledge of those different from yourself and documentary films are a powerful tool to provide that perspective in an engaging, educational and entertaining way.

Gayle Loeber from NETA views the increase in independent productions having a large impact on a national level this way, “I think in part because there has been a sea change in public television because of the work ITVS does. The fact there has been attention brought to the fact that independent voices were not being heard on public television.” This is an opportunity for the local PBS station to capitalize on the national scheduling of independent productions and create their own time slot for locally produced programs.

Still, the CPB mission statement in Chapter Three is not consistently supported. Unfortunately, not all public television stations are able or willing to put the resources behind the initiative. Several stations do not make it a priority, because they do not see the need for more local programs or they don’t have the infrastructure to support it. Rhode Island PBS in Providence, RI, is a case in point. Until recently, our station was using 1980s technology for our production and broadcast equipment. We were unable to shoot easily in the field and our studio equipment frequently broke down. We were only able to provide our audiences with

one or two local half-hour studio-produced programs a week. We did have an AVID editing system, but it was scheduled to capacity. Under this scenario, it was impossible to provide production support to independent producers. The station has since upgraded to all digital equipment, with a new field kit that includes HD cameras, and added two more NLE systems. Our ability to offer guidance and equipment to independent producers is still limited, but as the station establishes local programming as a priority we now have the technology.

In some cases, PBS stations believe that they are fulfilling their mission for local programming in-house. In my opinion, this still does not “address the needs of unserved and underserved audiences” in their communities. Without involving the people of the community in the dialogue, you cannot meet their needs.

In the final chapter I will draw conclusions based on these results and recommend best practices for PBS stations to follow in order to strengthen their relationships with independent producers and therefore, expand the democratic project.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

Glenda Balas, in her 2003 book, Recovering a Public Vision for Public Television calls for change in the way PBS stations serve their communities: “Public television must find new ways to grant individuals and constituencies space on the spectrum, access to public speech through public media” (127).

I agree. If public television stations are to live up to the mission set forth by CPB, as well as fulfill their own mission statements, they need to partner with independent producers from their local community. My own station’s mission statement, as well as those of the stations in this study (see Appendix B), all state the importance of civic- and/or community-based objectives. These statements are not in conflict with the CPB mission statement, but rather expand it to a local level. Two of the stations, KQED and KCPT, mention “changing technologies” or “media assets” in their mission statements, recognizing that the new digital technology has an important role in fulfilling their missions. It is not a coincidence that these stations have strong relationships with independent producers in their community. KQED and KCPT capitalize on the accessibility that new digital technology has provided to the citizens of their community. The stations encourage and actively partner with filmmakers in their markets, so they can provide multiple voices to their diverse viewers.

Public television was created to serve the needs of citizens on a local and national community level. But constant financial difficulties faced by PBS stations make it unrealistic to expect that each station can fulfill all of its community’s programming needs. Most of the stations across the country spend the majority of their programming budget on the national schedule, leaving little or no money to purchase local productions. Plus, very few stations

are economically fluid enough to employ sufficient in-house staff to produce programming that represents different points-of-view that exist within their community.

My situation at Rhode Island PBS is somewhat different from other PBS stations. It is not unusual in this area of New England for people to be able to watch more than one PBS station. The proximity of station transmitters has meant signals would commonly overlap each other. The majority of viewers in Rhode Island have historically been able to watch at least one, if not both, of the Boston PBS stations (WGBH and WGBX) over the airwaves. With the advent of cable, signal strength is not a factor. Thus, the cable viewers in Rhode Island can choose from as many as five PBS stations. Therefore, it does not make sense to duplicate the same schedule as the dominant Boston station, WGBH, which follows the national PBS schedule closely. So, I shift the days and times of the national programs and add locally or nationally acquired programs to differentiate our schedule (e.g., British comedies on Tuesday nights). This strategy allows more locally produced program slots primetime (Monday – Saturday 8 – 11 p.m. and Sunday 7 – 11 p.m.).

Budget constraints also require us to have a different schedule from WGBH's. We are only able to purchase 40% of the programs offered by PBS. Because we do not purchase 100% of the programs (known as common carriage), we are required to air programs on a different night and at a different time than the national common carriage schedule. For example, we air *NOVA* on Monday nights, while the national feed is on Tuesday nights. It would cost us approximately \$425,000 per year to purchase 100% of the national PBS programming. My entire programming budget is approximately \$345,000 per year, of this approximately \$170,000 goes towards the national PBS programs. The remaining funds allow me to purchase programs from national and local sources that will be of particular

interest to our viewers. I spend approximately \$75,000 for fundraising and non-primetime programming. Approximately \$60,000, is allocated for British comedy and drama and “must haves” (e.g. *Are You Being Served?*, *Lawrence Welk Show* and *Red Green Show*). These “must haves” are decided on by viewer input. The remaining amount (\$40,000) is used to purchase specials and series from national distributors and local independent producers. The average purchase price I can spend is \$500 per hour. A national distributor (e.g. American Public Television) collects fees from numerous PBS stations to aggregate a respectable amount of money for a program, up to \$20,000. But \$500 offered to an independent producer who has just spent anywhere from \$30,000 to \$100,000 on a one-hour program can appear insulting. I usually don’t offer a fee for rights to the program but do cover the cost of closed-captioning. It is seen as an added value since independent producers rarely budget for this service, and it is now a requirement that all broadcast programs be closed-captioned. A typical hour-long program costs between \$500 and \$1,000 for captioning.

Not being able to fund locally produced programs is a major problem. A typical hour documentary, even utilizing in house staff can cost between \$20,000 and \$75,000. And outside of the station a budget for a one-hour documentary is between \$100,000 and \$300,000, representing about a third of my entire program budget for the year. Even with the desire to fund locally produced programs it would not be fiscally possible. This scenario is true for the majority of PBS stations across the country.

B.J. Bullert in her book, Public Television: Politics and the Battle over Documentary Film says, “Given the aesthetic, editorial, and economic constraints, most independents have turned their backs on public television and sought venues for their work in cable, public access, and film festivals (197).” This indicates that stations have to find more ways to make

it appealing to independent producers to bring their films to their local PBS station. If independent producers are not encouraged and helped by their stations they will go elsewhere with their films. This would leave a large hole in PBS stations' ability to fulfill their missions.

In order for PBS stations to survive in this multi-channel and multi-media environment, they must embrace localism. They must find new ways to obtain local programming that reflects the points-of-view of their communities and is produced by a variety of voices. Balas summed up what PBS stations need to do:

In the final analysis, public broadcasting's ability to function as an agent of social reform, public speech, and community ties relies upon collective action. The work ahead is hard, too expensive, at times too frustrating to do alone. As public broadcasting moves forward in the twenty-first century, it requires a powerful identity, a clear and compelling vision, and the clanging of a community bell that summons us all to old commitments. (139)

Balas writes it is not possible for stations to fulfill their missions by themselves. PBS stations must reach out into their communities and nurture filmmakers so they can assist in fulfilling the stations mission. As the CPB mission says, "The fundamental purpose of public telecommunications is to provide programs and services which inform, enlighten and enrich the public." What better way to accomplish this goal than to have the public provide the programming?

The best way to meet this objective is for PBS stations to actively seek out and cultivate relationships with independent producers in their market. I have slowly built a list of independent producers in Rhode Island who know I am always looking for films on local subjects. I first began working with the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities (RICH) on a collaboration of short films (see Appendix J). RICH was able to provide stipends to the

filmmakers and Rhode Island PBS helped with facilities. Each short film was shown in conjunction with a national program on the same or similar subject (e.g., girls growing up without fathers). At the end of the series, the short films were edited into one program and broadcast again. I have maintained relationships with a number of those producers and they now submit full-length programs.

There are a few independent producer organizations in the state such as The Rhode Island Film Collaborative and South County Independent Producers. I am currently working with one independent producer in South County and have made overtures to the collaborative. I am in conversation with the Rhode Island International Film Festival to organize a series of local films from the festival that would be broadcast in the winter. I have also established relationships with the film and television departments at local universities and colleges. Whenever possible I visit classes and describe the types of programs that would be appropriate for PBS, and I encourage students to submit their films to me for consideration.

The relationship with each independent producer is different, but all require my time to screen the program and provide feedback to the filmmaker. The films are submitted at different levels of completion. I am currently working on a set of guidelines, similar to the one Community Idea Stations publishes. This will streamline the process and give the independent producer a clear understanding of PBS requirements, both in content and technical format. I will discuss known problems. For example, the audio quality on digital consumer cameras is problematic. The solution is an external microphone to capture broadcast quality sound. Most independent producers starting out do not realize this until they submit the program for air and get rejected because of low-quality audio.

I currently try to schedule at least one locally produced program a month. As I expand my relationships with local independent producers, my goal is to have enough locally produced programming to have a weekly presence in the schedule.

My situation, with regards to independent producers, is not that different from other PBS stations; we all have to develop working relationships with filmmakers in our areas. I would recommend to other stations that they increase their funding, training (i.e. expand the demographic profile of filmmakers) and accessibility to local filmmakers. Specifically:

Access

- Get out of the station and into the community.
- Attend screenings and local film festivals.
- Let producers know the station welcomes submissions by responding to their phone calls, e-mails, and letters in a timely manner.
- If a production does not meet broadcast standards take the time to explain why and how to correct the problems.
- If a production does not meet content standards, take the time to explain why.
- Post a call for films on the station Web site and through on-air spots.
- Make publicizing local programs a priority.

Funding

- Partner with arts and humanities councils and historical societies on special calls for entries.
- Research grant opportunities that can be passed along to independent producers.
- Have the station be the fiscal sponsor for grants.

- Offer equipment or studio time to filmmakers.

Training

- Partner with local colleges and universities to provide training and guidance to students.
- Partner with local colleges and universities to provide continuing education seminars for local independent producers.
- Set up a training day workshop at the station for people who are considering producing their own films but need guidance.
- Publish a guideline for independent producers.
- If a production does not make it to air, encourage the filmmaker to attend workshops and submit his/her next project.

It is my opinion that by providing their viewers with locally produced films; PBS stations will invigorate the spirit of public television. It takes time and commitment from the PBS station staff to cultivate the relationships needed to have a steady stream of programming from the local community. Filmmakers need to be convinced of the value of having their films shown on PBS. Increasing the number of hours PBS stations devote to locally produced programs will increase the stations' relevance to the community. It expands and enhances the democratic project that began more than forty years ago. In most markets, the PBS station is the only locally run broadcast entity not driven by advertising revenue. To truly fulfill its mission, each public television station must capitalize on this difference. One way stations can accomplish this goal is to reach out into their local community to provide guidance in producing and a place to showcase the diverse topics and subjects that exist.

I believe that by expanding the amount of local programming that is aired on Rhode Island PBS, I am fulfilling the mission of my station, and the community has a media outlet that actively responds to its needs and issues. In my opinion, it is vital that all PBS stations make it a priority to work with independent producers in their communities. Giving citizens a unique responsibility for what is shown on their local PBS station will expand and enhance the democratic project by giving “access to public speech through public media” (Balas 127).

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Appendix A: PBS Mission, Funding and Technology Timeline

	PBS History	PBS Funding	Technology
1965	<p>1967: President Johnson signs Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, authorizing federal operating aid to stations through new agency, CPB. CPB funding decisions would be made year-to-year.</p>	<p>1968: First federal appropriation is \$5M. CPB begins general support grants to stations (later called Community Service Grants).</p>	<p>1967: Ampex Corp. launches a portapack with a battery-powered camera and recorder weighing approx. 50 lbs. Costs \$65,000. The video cannot be edited.</p>
1970	<p>1969: Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) is created.</p>	<p>1972: President Nixon vetoes two-year CPB authorizing law; a one-year bill is enacted later. Federal appropriation \$48M</p>	<p>1970: Ampex Corp. announced a new line of home tape recorders and playback machines costing \$1000.</p> <p>1972: Fernseh hand-held camera available, weighs 15 lbs. Costs \$50,000-\$75,000. The first NLE system CMX-600, is introduced by a joint venture of CBS and Memorex. Holds 27 minutes of disc time and costs \$500,000.</p>
1975	<p>1973: PBS reorganization cuts parental ties with CPB, adds board of lay leaders.</p> <p>1974: PBS establishes Station Program Cooperative (SPC) to aggregate station funds for national programming.</p> <p>1977: Carnegie Corporation establishes Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting (Carnegie II). Report released in 1978.</p>	<p>1975: President Ford signs five-year funding act anticipating advance appropriations.</p> <p>1976: Congress appropriates funding through 1979.</p> <p>1979: Public TV splits lobbying function away from PBS.</p>	<p>1975: Sony's Betamax enters the consumer market. Costs \$1,295. Records less than 2 hrs.</p> <p>1976: Apple I, a single-board personal computer with a video interface, costs \$666.66.</p> <p>1977: Apple II is released, costs \$1,298.</p>

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Computer History Museum. 12 February 2007. <<http://www.computerhistory.org>>

	PBS History	PBS Funding	Technology
1980	<p>1982: Station consortium (SPC) launches <i>American Playhouse</i>.</p> <p>1983: First hour-long nightly news program debuts: <i>MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour</i>. WGBH and SPC launches <i>Frontline</i>.</p>	<p>1980: National Association of Public Television Stations (APTS) is created to lobby for stations.</p> <p>1981: President Reagan seeks \$88M cut in CPB funding, achieves \$35M cut in FY83.</p>	<p>1981: Osborne I, the first portable computer, weighs 24 pounds and cost \$1,795. It features a 5-inch display, 64 kilobytes of memory, a modem, and two 5 1/4-inch floppy disk drives.</p> <p>1983: Sony releases the first consumer camcorder. Betamax-based Betamovie costs \$1500.</p>
1985	<p>1988: <i>P.O.V.</i> series begins, produced by American Documentary.</p>	<p>1985: Public broadcasting revenues pass \$1 billion by end of FY 85.</p> <p>1988: Congress directs CPB to create a program service to aid independent producers. Federal appropriation \$225M.</p>	<p>1986: Technologists at Apple Computer conceive digital link standard 1394, and chose the trademark 'FireWire'.</p> <p>1988: Digital recorders cost \$75,000. Character generators cost \$15,000 - \$50,000.</p> <p>1989: The first NLE, Avid Media Composer on the market costs \$130,000.</p>
1990	<p>1991: CPB creates ITVS.</p>	<p>1991: CPB commits \$6M to ITVS.</p> <p>1992: President George H.W. Bush signs CPB reauthorization act with Senate amendment requiring CPB to monitor "objectivity and balance" in programming.</p> <p>1994: Majority House Speaker Newt Gingrich's plan to "zero out" CPB funding is defeated. Federal appropriation is \$275M.</p>	<p>1993: Media 100 for Apple Computers enters the market and thousands of would-be editors have a low-cost, high-quality platform to use; costs approx. \$5,000.</p>

	PBS History	PBS Funding	Technology
1995			1995: First disk-based camera available. FireWire standards adopted by vendors. Avid Camcutter NLE system costs \$19,000.
	1998: PBS announces program development deal with Disney/ABC subsidiary Devillier Donegan Enterprises.	1998: Gore Commission recommends additional educational TV station in every market and backs trust fund; White House, Congress and FCC take no action. Federal appropriation \$250M	
			1999: Apple Computer's Final Cut Pro NLE system launches, costing \$999. Avid Symphony 2.0 NLE costs \$130,000. Panasonic Prosumer Camera costs \$4,000
2000	2000: Six years after collapse of <i>American Playhouse</i> , U.S. drama returns to PBS with infrequent programs on <i>Masterpiece Theatre</i> .		
	2002: <i>Independent Lens</i> series debuts on PBS.	2001: Federal funding \$340M 2002: Federal funding \$350M	2002: FCC announces digital mandate: - All stations must broadcast in digital by 2003 and analog will shut off in 2009.
	2003: PBS rushes to develop new programs with conservative political content to balance its <i>Now with Bill Moyers</i> . In June, CPB raises the issue of Moyers' partisanship at PBS Annual Meeting.	2003: Federal funding \$360M	2003: Avid Media Composer Adrenaline costs \$24,995. Canon digital video camera costs \$2,000
	2004: PBS says Knight Foundation will support planning for a public affairs cable channel called Public Square. Initiative falls apart in a year.	2004: Federal funding \$378M	2004: Final Cut Pro HD 4.5 NLE system costs \$999
2005	2005: PBS's first ombudsman begins work: Michael Getler, a former Washington Post writer, editor and ombudsman	2005: Federal funding \$387M	2005: Final Cut Studio costs \$1,299. Avid Express Pro bundle costs \$4,995.
	2006: Paula Kerger becomes sixth PBS president. <i>Independent Lens</i> begins online short film festival.	2006: Federal funding \$396M. ITVS annual allocation is \$12M.	2006: Apple Inc. upgrades Final Cut Pro with HD video capabilities.

Appendix B

Mission Statements of Case Study PBS Stations

KQED, San Francisco, CA

KQED provides the people of Northern California with consistently high-quality, noncommercial media that inform, educate and entertain. Through the creation and acquisition of programs, the leveraging of our multiple media assets, and strategic partnerships, KQED delivers television, radio and Internet content that makes people think, feel and explore new ideas. Our programming and services reflect the value we place on human dignity, lifelong learning, the power of ideas and the importance of community service and civic participation.

Community Idea Stations (WCVE), Richmond, VA

Our mission is to enrich community life through the promotion of education, culture and citizenship. The corporation will create, produce and deliver, through its television and radio facilities, non-commercial programs, which emphasize and strengthen these values.

KCPT, Kansas City, MO

Kansas City Public Television educates and enriches our community with quality programming and services that entertain, challenge minds and contribute to a life of learning. We accomplish this by: Serving as a platform to address community issues; producing and delivering quality local programming; delivering national and international programming; establishing partnerships, collaborations and strategic alliances to better serve our community; increasing awareness and value of KCPT to ensure long-term financial support; providing innovative educational programming and services; improving our delivery methods with current and rapidly changing technologies.

Nashville PTV (WNPT), Nashville, TN

Through electronic media, we engage our audiences of all ages with stimulating cultural, civic and entertainment experiences that educate.

Rhode Island PBS (WSBE), Providence, RI

The state's most accessible learning resource, committed to the principle of life-long learning and in response to the identified needs and interests of our viewers, the mission of Rhode Island PBS is to enhance the quality of life of the citizens in our viewing area by delivering programs and services that educate, inform, enrich, inspire and entertain viewers of all ages in Rhode Island, southeastern Massachusetts and eastern Connecticut, using the most advanced telecommunications technology available.

Appendix C

PBS Station Survey Results

- **Question 1:** Have you noticed an increase in quality of local productions submitted to your station from independent producers in the last five years?

54 people answered the question.

Yes 78%

No 22%

- **Question 2:** If yes, do you think this increase is a result of new technology that now makes production equipment affordable to local independent producers?

46 people answered the question; 8 respondents skipped the question.

Yes 80%

No 7%

Don't Know 13%

- **Question 3:** If yes, which of the new digital technologies has had the most impact?

40 people answered the question; 14 skipped the question; 1 answered with n/a..

Affordable broadcast quality camera equipment 0%

Desktop digital editing equipment 15%

Both of the above 85%

- **Question 4:** Have you, or someone else at your station, made a conscious effort to cultivate local productions in your market in the last five years?

54 answered the question.

Yes 74%

No 26%

- **Question 5:** If yes, how have you (or someone else at your station) cultivated these producers? (Choose all that apply.)

A: Sending out Requests for Proposals or Requests for Programs

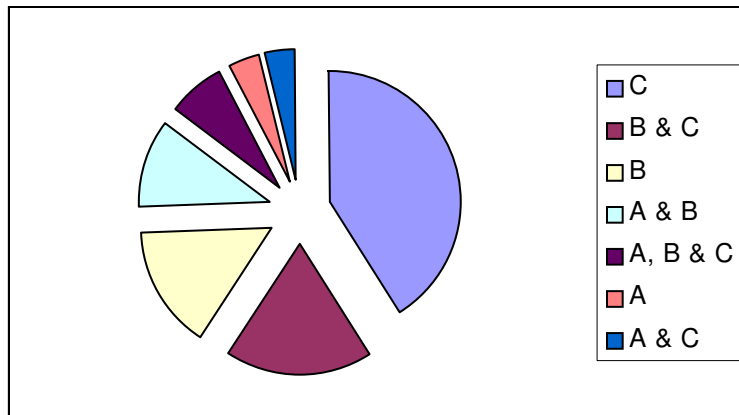
B: Partnering with another agency such as a local university or civics group

C: Asking for local programs either by broadcast or on the web

D: Other

30 people answered the question; 24 skipped the question; 22 responded “other”.

C	11
B & C	5
B	4
A & B	3
A, B, & C	2
A	1
A & C	1



The comments³ from the 22 people who responded “other” were:

1. I've only been overseeing programming for the last year, but I have been contacted by a large number of local producers who are no longer looking for production assistance, just airtime. This is the main change I've noticed since the last time I oversaw programming in Springfield 7 years ago.
WNPT/Nashville, TN
2. While we have not developed an official or concerted effort to seek out new talent, there seems to be an intuitive awareness among the producing community. In addition, when submissions of merit are received, our VP of Local Programming continues to develop the relationship with the goal of encouraging new talent for our independent producer pool.
Connecticut PTV/Hartford, CT
3. They come in droves directly to me. I'm way overloaded. Just outside of LA where nobody speaks to up-and-comers, they all try the local PBS stations.
KVCR/San Bernardino, CA
4. Also by word of mouth from those I have already purchased from.
WNED/Buffalo, NY
5. Regular meetings with local independents filmmakers such as Producer's Associations, film organization, festivals, etc.
KERA/Dallas, TX
6. We have a highly organized RFP system called the, "Independent Producer Submission Manual" that is a lengthy, detailed explanation on how independent producers can partner with WCVE.
WCVE/Richmond, VA
7. Staying in contact with them on a regular basis. WMFE/Orlando, FL
8. Partnering to present a local independent film series. Employing independent producers on short contracts to expand our production capability.
UNC TV/North Carolina
9. Just answered the phone! They call all the time now.
Arkansas ETV
10. Providing grant monies for local independent producers who produce programs about local and regional stories and issues.

³ All comments from the surveys are copied verbatim.

KET/Kentucky

11. We have a very active media community, so I just need to wait for them to come to me. I meet with anyone interested in producing to make sure whatever they end up with meets our editorial and underwriting guidelines, and actively maintain contact with the best of those.

Houston PBS/Houston, TX

12. We've been mostly trying to work with filmmakers by hiring or partnering with them.

KNME/Albuquerque, NM

13. Working with independents through networking with grant organizations and other producers.

Louisiana Public Broadcasting

14. We sub contract with independent producers to work with us on our local productions.

WGCU/Fort Myers, FL

15. The most important thing that Indy producers can do is shop the story idea to their local outlet before they start production and seek input in shaping the content for broadcast. It's the content not the technology.

NJN Public Television/New Jersey

16. I make sure to read through the arts sections of local paper and the weekly arts 'rags' that are distributed, and University papers. I'll attend screenings of serious and experimental work and then "sign them" as program supplier. Typically, on their 2nd outing, I will offer services as their Executive Producer, but in exchange, ask that the show become a "WGTE Presentation".

WGTE/Toledo, OH

17. Airing indi productions in visible air slots and providing extensive off-air promotions, which is eagerly snapped up by local media.

WNEO/WEAO/Kent, OH

18. Our community is relatively small. The independent producers working on projects that of the public television ilk, know that none else really want to air them. I also solicit independent producers to work on station projects, because they sometimes can get it done more efficiently than the station can. We also partner with independents to get grants to work on projects to air on our station and nationally.

PBS Hawaii

19. The past three years we've included a run of local independent films in our fall schedule. This fall would be season 4 but we're pushing off until the winter quarter.

KCTS/Seattle, WA

20. Partnering with area groups.

WPSU-TV/University Park, PA

21. Curating/airing an annual four-hour series showcasing films, videos from students in southern California film and television schools.

KCET/Los Angeles, CA

22. Viewing the programs they send to us and then deciding if we can use them or not.

KVIE/Sacramento, CA

- **Question 6:** Do you anticipate the number of quality local productions from independent filmmakers increasing in the next five years?

54 people answered the question

Yes 76%

No 6%

Don't Know 18%

- **Question 7:** Are there any barriers at your station in accepting quality local productions from local independent filmmakers? (choose all that apply)

51 people responded to the question; 3 skipped the question.

Poor production values 80%

Copyright/release issues 69%

Scheduling constraints 57%

Reviewing resources 29%

Management decisions 22%

Controversial topics 22%

Union Contracts 6%

All of the above 6%

Other (please specify) – 13 responded with the following comments:

1. Funding. Often, producers come to us with half a film, or less. They don't understand fundraising and want us to fund raise. So projects become delayed, or we have trouble committing to them. Also, most local producers are not interested in only local TV. They want national air, which makes the resources even more of a challenge.

WXXI/Rochester, NY

2. Format and standard running times are also problematic. New technology in the field also means we sometimes incur costs (in-kind) to transfer their material into our broadcast format. Also, non-standard running times can provide several minutes (10 plus) of dead air between programs, which can limit scheduling. We are also a very aggressive in our fundraising and local productions so having available time in the schedule is sometimes challenging. We do look for broadcast but have started to encourage multi-task producers who are able to provide content across platforms in order to generate more online exclusive content, etc.

Connecticut PTV

3. Improved technical quality does not insure improved content. Content is always the issue.

Oregon PBS

4. There are none.

WNED/Buffalo, NY

5. Inappropriate funders.

Idaho PTV/Boise, ID

6. In some cases, poor story-telling abilities - leading to confusing programs which do not make a lot of sense. # 9 - we just don't have enough to be relevant {<:(

Smokey Hills Public Television/Bunker Hill, KS

7. Finding time to get them on is really the only issue, and with the digital channels coming on line that won't be a problem in the future.

KCPT/Kansas City, MO

8. The producers have to pay to have the programs closed-captioned.
WGVU/Grand Rapids, MI
9. Main hurdle is working with the producers to make changes to their work that I feel will enhance the work's message, quality, strength etc. I would never request a change for editorial reasons, only to enhance the quality of the work. Sometimes filmmakers (especially the young idealists) refuse those changes. The result of which is loss of broadcast opportunity.
WGTE/Toledo, OH
10. Beyond poor production values, sub-standard technical quality is a problem. Bad audio and video levels, no closed-captioning, running times don't meet anything close to a standard length, etc. Too often, 'producers' come to us after their project is finished --rather than while in development, and there is nothing that can be done with their 'masterpiece'.
WTIU/Bloomington, IN
11. Accuracy of content.
WUSF/Tampa, FL
12. Most of the above applies (with the exception of union contracts) but the one's checked are most frequent.
Hawaii PBS
13. The production quality is less of a problem than the editorial content. Inability to tell compelling stories is the biggest barrier.
WPSU/University Park, PA

- **Question 8:** For statistical analysis only, please enter your name and station.

54 responded to the question.

- **Question 9:** Would you be willing to participate in a more in-depth case study regarding the increase of local independent programs to your station?

54 people answered the question.

34 responded "Yes" and 24 responded "No."

Appendix D

Independent Filmmaker Survey Results

- **Question 1:** Have you submitted a program to your local public television station that has been accepted for broadcast in the past five years?

43 answered the question.

Yes	81%
No	19%

- **Question 2:** Call letters and city/state of your local PBS Station?

40 answered the question; 3 skipped the question.

- **Question 3:** Have you purchased your own production and/or editing equipment in the last five years? If yes, specifically what equipment?

43 answered the question.

Yes, Desktop Editing	49%
Yes, Audio Equipment	42%
Yes, Both of the above equipment	40%
Yes, Camera	37%
Yes, Lighting Equipment	21%
No	9%
Other	8 responses were:

1. I am just about to invest in further production equipment. I am waiting for the next generation of high definition to buy a new camera. I think there is a lot of confusion both among filmmakers and also what broadcasters will desire going forward. This is particularly difficult for independent producers as projects can take several years to complete.

i. Providence, RI

2. MiniDV Tape Deck

San Francisco, CA

3. DVD Duplication Providence, RI
4. Small format cameras, basic editing software, audio equipment, a few basic lights. But only for Indie docs and only because I couldn't afford to rent or buy the fancy stuff. Boston, MA
5. Software--editing & graphics, training Los Angeles, CA
6. Grip equipment, DVD authoring and printing Philadelphia, PA
7. Tripod, headphones, editing software Providence, RI

- **Question 4:** Did you previously rent/hire production equipment? If no, please describe how your production was produced.

43 answered the question.

Yes 60%

No 40%

16 described how their production was produced:

1. Through equipment provided by my position as a faculty member at a university. Tucson, AZ
2. Bought first camera 12 years ago when I started making films. Boston, MA
3. Borrowed from universities. Providence, RI
4. We had used equipment and volunteers from access cable. Providence, RI
5. We rented cameras from local rental houses, borrowed a lot of gear, and hired freelancers. There were a lot of young shooters, PA's and Sound Techs. We eventually hired the pro's for a sound mix and color correction. Providence, RI
6. Owned Equipment. Film School. Providence, RI

7. Only very sporadically - e.g., tripod and lights. But generally I had my own or borrowed from friends.
Orange County, CA
8. Bought first camera 8 years ago, rented or borrowed previously.
Lexington, KY
9. My documentary was my first film, produced with my own equipment or that of people for hire.
Los Angeles, CA
10. In 16mm film - rent some - own some
San Francisco, CA
11. I own my own gear.
Honolulu, HI
12. We always owned the camera, sound and lights. We edited in a studio.
Rochester, NY
13. I have always owned my own audio and lighting gear and continue to update it. I rented cameras for film and video. Six years ago I bought a VX2000 and used it for about 1/3 of the shooting. I would still rent a film camera. I now need to replace my video camera.
Austin, TX
14. Self-produced.
Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
15. I've owned my own digital camera and editing equipment for about 8 years.
Dallas, TX
16. I was able to borrow equipment from my college.
Providence, RI

• **Question 5:** Did you previously hire postproduction equipment or personnel?

43 answered the question.

Yes 36

If no, how did you complete your film? 7

7 responded with:

1. The equipment was owned by the contractor hired to edit.
Providence, RI
2. Owned Equipment. Film School.
Providence, RI
3. No, Would sneak into an edit suite at night to edit. But still hire editor for feature docs today.
Lexington, KY
4. I own my own edit stations & decks.
Honolulu, HI
5. And I still do. Having equipment is not the same as having enough people to do the work.
Austin, TX
6. Self-post-production.
Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
7. I completed it on my own and with an intern.
Providence, RI

- **Question 6:** Has the purchase of new production equipment increased the ease in which you have been able to have your program shown on public television?

40 answered the question; 3 skipped the question.

Yes 23

No, please explain 17

17 gave an explanation:

1. This is actually hard to answer -- the production equipment (and the relative cheapness of it these days) helped me getting my program made. But I'm not sure it actually made a difference in getting it SHOWN. It's still about a good story. On the other hand, without being able to afford the equipment, I never would've made the program and wouldn't have had it broadcast!
Boston, MA
2. This is a yes/no answer. I have started working in documentary film within the last 5 years. But I would def say that the ease and expense of digital technology has supported my decision to produce independent docs.
Providence, RI

3. It's really about content. To be honest, the proliferation of all this gear may even make it harder, now that we are competing against so many people. Also, we had trouble even talking to stations like WGBH, who has an established system, a core group of filmmakers, and a tight schedule.
Providence, RI
4. No, Owning own equipment has not changed ease in showing programs on public television.
Providence, RI
5. Yes and no. The cheapness of the equipment has allowed me to go ahead and make my films. Or at least get to the point of a pitch tape to get into the door. But digital equipment is also increasing competition, and also raising the bar - many funders now expect a fully fleshed out pitch tape, essentially pushing more and more development and even production costs onto independent producers.
Orange County, CA
6. Absolutely not. It is more difficult now; since there are more first time makers with projects.
Lexington, KY
7. I haven't produced for public television recently. Anonymous
8. The station has very few slots for independent work that is not part of a series.
New York, NY
9. Yes and no, I used my own equipment for indie projects only, which are harder to get on PBS. But, having said that, without my own low cost equipment I probably would never have been able to produce an indie doc.
Boston, MA
10. No it is never easy to get a program on PBS. Our show was broadcast nationally on Independent Lens. Even though our film was funded by ITVS, we have to compete to get one of the few spots on the national broadcast. It is never easy to get independent work seen. But the work is easier to make on digital technology.
San Francisco, CA
11. It has made no difference. Honolulu, HI
12. I have not purchased my own equipment but I can see the advantage of affordable cameras and editing software as an advantage to independent producers. I may consider purchasing my own gear in the future. The cost

of renting/hiring crew and facilities is very prohibitive to low budget independent productions.

Chicago, IL

13. I also teach. Clearly more of my students' work gets on stations like KERA, KLRU, and KUHT than they might have 8 years ago. Generally the acceptance of PBS and other local stations of the better, small format video equipment has made it easier for everyone to get work on the air. And the dramatic price reduction of NLE video editing systems and storage capacity has meant greater ability for emerging filmmakers to make productions and experienced filmmakers to initiate and complete new work.

Austin, TX

14. Already had digital set-up.

Dallas/Fort Worth, TX

15. The equipment I purchased allows me to work on non-broadcast creative projects but when producing for local TV I still need to hire production and editing equipment.

Honolulu, HI

16. Getting programs shown on public TV is very competitive. That competition has only increased due to the lower cost of production equipment and widely available editing software. There has not been any increase in available opportunities/time for broadcast of independent productions.

Philadelphia, PA

17. It's still in the pitch.

Boston, MA

- **Question 7:** Do you think the accessibility of broadcast quality production equipment has improved your relationship with your local public television station?

42 answered the question; 1 skipped the question.

Yes 56%

1. We did our online at KQED and it was easy to import our media into their system.

San Francisco, CA

No, please explain 44%

The 16 explanations were:

1. I am not sure. It seems like places like RULE and Talamas (2 rental companies) have been around for a long time. It has definitely gotten cheaper and easier to make broadcast quality productions though. But as for

relations, RIPBS has been awesome, but I have no relationship with WGBH. I also tried getting my show on WGBY, but they never returned my calls/emails.

Providence, RI

2. No, Owning own broadcast quality equipment has not changed relationship with public television.
Providence, RI
3. Yes and no. Yes to the extent that it's allowed me to make a film that's been of interest to them. But on the other hand, they have their own staff, too.
Orange County, CA
4. Not relevant to our situation, we are national producers. Anonymous
5. Yes and no. We produce more content therefore have better relationship, but are much less reliant on their help in the process. So the local station now has little input or help in the film.
Lexington, KY
6. Already had strong relationships with the station, and I believe it is relationships not equipment that provides access to the station.
San Francisco, CA
7. I'm not directly involved with my local public television station in California where I reside. However my ability to produce a rough cut for submission to my LinCs sponsoring station in NH was totally dependent on use of digital equipment.
Los Angeles, CA
8. I haven't produced for public television recently. Anonymous
9. The production value is a non-issue if the content is important to the station or community; accessibility to high-quality equipment that results in high value productions does not open doors. Doors open at PBS with past relationships or by working with a PBS-approved production company. Producers need to know what types of programs the station or the PBS system is looking for.
New York, NY
10. No difference. Honolulu, HI
11. No, too many independents in my area. Los Angeles, CA
12. I don't think it's made any difference whatsoever. Perhaps this is because my local station is WNET - such a large market. I also produced a show with WPBT in Miami, another big station. The format issue was never a problem for me.
New York, NY

13. Not necessarily. We had already converted to our own system before the relationship was forged. Owning our own system made production more affordable and flexible. Rochester, NY
14. The question doesn't really apply to my situation. Honolulu, HI
15. My relationship with the local PBS stations has not been changed by changing equipment. I have a relationship with both local stations: multiple programs broadcast on WYBE; currently producing a documentary funded by ITVS in association with WHYY. It did not happen and has not changed because of changing technology. Philadelphia, PA
16. There has always been broadcast quality production equipment used that was the standard at the time. Boston, MA

- **Question 8:** Do you see other barriers to getting your work on your local public television station? Choose all that apply:

37 responded to the question; 6 skipped the question.

Non responsiveness of staff	86%
Format isn't compatible to the station	10%
Don't know how to submit programs	5%
Closed captioning requirement	5%
All of the above	0%

Other 23 responded:

1. The #1 barrier is actually that there are so few strands where independent work can show on local and national public TV. It's mostly just POV and Independent Lens, that's all. Boston, MA
2. I know that with more affordable gear out on the market there are more producers sending "shows" to the local PBS stations. Some times producers confuse PBS with public access, and it makes the stations job harder, because they have to look through many tapes to find the good ones. It creates a barrier, making it harder to get someone to look at your tape. Providence, RI

3. I think our local PBS station may be constrained by lack of funds to support the programming of local independent productions. There could be so much more but the station would need to identify this as a priority.
Providence, RI
4. Well, I spent \$30,000 on a film, and got \$300 license fee (which did not cover the closed caption fees). but the real problem is getting staff to watch the films, and then finding time to schedule it in. It sucks that local programming is getting cut, and it also miserable that a channel like WGBH will show countless hours of BBC programming from the mid 1990's, but won't even return a phone call about showing a quality film about New Bedford.
Providence, RI
5. Queer content.
San Francisco, CA
6. Closed Captioning cost is one thing on the horizon that may restrict the flow of programming from independent producers to local broadcast. This is not yet easily done by the one-person shop.
Providence, RI
7. Locally it is a snap. Nationally, submitting to PBS is months of red tap and harder for indies who are not submitting through a strand, to get responses from PBS even though your show has been accepted.
Lexington, KY
8. Mainly it's about funding, getting the completion funding to hire editor, sound mixer, pay for archival footage, and a rough and fine cut to do an online edit. PBS/ITVS seems to require a good rough cut in order to consider it for completion funding for broadcast.
Los Angeles, CA
9. It's unclear what the station is looking for; the station has few free hours for programs that fall outside of PBS series or pledge programs -- they work in blocks and do not have flexibility for one-off programs.
New York, NY
10. At WGBH not at RI PBS.
Boston, MA
11. Very few spots for independent work after all the PBS national schedule is programmed etc...
San Francisco, CA
12. None...don't have that experience.
Honolulu, HI
13. There is nothing in it for independents - except a venue. They have no \$ - they usually offer nothing.
Bozeman, MT
14. There are so many producers pitching independent projects to PBS - I think that's the real difficulty. And the audience PBS is going entirely dictates what kinds of programs they will air. I think these are the main obstacles for

an independent producer. And of course if it's your first time trying to submit to PBS I am sure you will have a great deal of non-responsiveness - they are overwhelmed with submissions and requests. New York, NY

15. No, not really. Tucson, AZ
16. I think local stations are changing their attitudes toward independent producers because of the high quality that can now be obtained from affordable production gear. High quality productions can now be made for lower budgets. Chicago, IL
17. None of these are barriers for us. The barrier is accessing funding to produce a broadcast quality program. Rochester, NY
18. Non-responsiveness of programmers. Sufficient funding to make-work. Narrow scope of program preferences by programmers. Poor understanding b local stations about how to develop local audiences for local work (though some progress gets made). "PBS mindset" about who their audience is, who it can be, and what kind of programs they are interested in. Austin, TX
19. No Money. Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
20. In my experience, non-responsiveness applies mostly to larger market stations. Cookeville, TN
21. Most local PBS stations, including KERA, are in pretty dire financial straits. While I've partnered with them, my work has been funded by ITVS and POV, and broadcast nationally. I don't see much of a future in working with local PBS stations. Dallas, TX
22. Availability of broadcast time. Commitment to their own ideas. No funds available for independent production. Union regulations. Lack of interest. No imagination. Philadelphia, PA
23. The competition is getting tougher. Many more films are being submitted. Troy, NY

- **Question 9:** Did your local PBS station assist you in producing a program? Choose all that apply.

43 responded to the question.

No

52%

Yes, with funding 29%

Yes editing equipment 23%

Yes, production equipment 20%

Yes, studio space 10%

Other 27 responded:

1. I did a LiNCS partnership and received staff support, including feedback and graphics work. Tucson, AZ
2. Only a little funding -- but WGBH also helped by going in for a LiNCS grant to ITVS with me. Boston, MA
3. They helped shape our ideas and transform our style from news to documentary. Durham, NH
4. My shorts were broadcast as part of a collaboration between local PSB and RI State Council for Humanities. Providence, RI
5. Camera crew, station relations, publicity and marketing. San Francisco, CA
6. My local PBS Station helped us to have the program captioned by directing us to a company that provided such services and help find a way to cover part of the cost. Providence, RI
7. One of my projects received "LinCS" funding through ITVS - it was intended to promote interaction between PTV stations and independents; the station was supportive, but the major contribution of theirs was the use of the online suite. Orange County, CA
8. Film was sponsored by Miami's WPBT for an ITVS grant WNET my local station, ran the program. New York, NY
9. All of the above at various times in various projects. Lexington, KY
10. Presenting Station for National Broadcast. San Francisco, CA
11. NHPTV was the sponsoring PBS station because of my subject matter. However, because of the distance, while they were helpful on occasion, they were not very involved in the actual post production. Los Angeles, CA

12. They are not interested in participating in programs such as ITVS LIncs, where indie producers team up with a local PBS station. The station does not have to put in cash or, many times, production in-kind. What is requested is to present the program to the system. New York, NY
13. Went to RI PBS and they offered in-kind services and a LINCS partnership. Boston, MA
14. Through an ITVS/KQED LIncs grant. A very rare grant. San Francisco, CA
15. Yes, with other services. Honolulu, HI
16. They help with in-kind for promotional purposes. Bozeman, MT
17. Yes, with PBS deliverable and promotion information. Los Angeles, CA
18. Yes, becoming a partner for funding (LiNcs). Anonymous
19. I lived and worked in Kentucky for many years and do have a long-term relationship with my OLD public television station, KET. I have not ever worked with my new public television station, KUAT, but I bet they could be helpful with something. Tucson, AZ
20. In Kind contributions. Archival footage, Music licensing clearance, Marketing and station relations. Chicago, IL
21. Our PBS affiliate partner with us to access a grant that required a PBS station partner. They didn't give money or services, but provided the link we needed to the funder (ITVS LiNCs). Rochester, NY
22. BUT...KUHT in Houston DID assist with equipment, in-kind services, and partnering to seek funding. KERA, because of a single series by filmmaker and Dallas Video Festival director, Bart Weiss, has shown my students' work AND KLRU has initiated three series that have welcomed local work. One program was a local features program that twice in the past three years showed student documentary work from my class (www.EastAustinStories.org). The second was a series produced by SXSW Festival director Matt Dentler who has also programmed my work and my students work in the festival. The third is a new short documentary series, one of whose two producers is a former student of mine. Austin, TX
23. Production Services - transcripts, captioning, etc. Dallas/Fort Worth, TX

24. We partnered through ITVS's LiNKS. KERA was a partner in name only. I used all my own equipment. All the funding came from ITVS.
Dallas, TX

25. Partnering for ITVS LInCS grant. Philadelphia, PA

26. Online editing. Troy, NY

27. With advice and guidance, as an executive producer. Providence, RI

- **Question 10:** If you would like to be contacted further for in-depth case study please enter your name and contact information.

Out of 43, 26 responded in the affirmative.

Appendix E

PBS Personnel Interview Questions

Tape is rolling. Today's date is _____. Please give me your name, title and which PBS station you work for.

Do you agree to participate in this academic research project (title of project) and grant the author, Kathryn Larsen, the right to include your statements in her master's thesis?
This constitutes a release. Thank you.

I would like to get a little background information first.

1. Can you tell me a little bit about what you do in your capacity as [job title]?
2. How long have you been involved in public television?
3. Do you seek documentaries from independent producers for your station?

OK, thanks, the remaining questions are part of my research project. Please assume I am referring to documentary productions when I ask about independent productions.

1. In the past five years, has the **quantity** of independent productions submitted to your station for airing? How? What do you attribute the changes to?
2. In the past five years, has the **quality** of submitted independent productions changed? How? What do you attribute the change(s) in quality to?
3. Of the independent productions you have received in this past year...
 - a. Approximately what percentage made it on air with no revisions? Can you give me an example?
 - b. Approximately what percentage needed revisions to meet broadcast standards? Example of what needed fixing?
 - c. Approximately what percentage needed revisions to the content, based upon your station policies? Can you give me an example?
 - d. Approximately what percentage was rejected? Can you give me an example?
 - e. How have these percentages of acceptance and rejection changed in the past five years? How?
4. What are some of the issues you encounter with independent productions? I am specifically interested in:
 - a. Audio quality?
 - b. Video quality?
 - c. Other production issues?
 - d. Aesthetics?
 - e. Audience appeal?
 - f. Closed-captioning costs? Typically who covers this cost?

- g. In-house costs of supporting these programs?
 - h. Any other “infrastructure” issues?
5. In your opinion, what effects has the availability of cheaper editing & production equipment had on the programs you receive from independent producers? Pro or con?
 6. Has the demographic of independent producers changed in the past five years? How (in terms of race, gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic levels, etc.)?
 - a. What do you attribute the change(s) to?
 - b. Have the topics shifted and/or widened? How?
 7. Do you see your station’s involvement with independent producers changing in the next few years? How?
 - a. Increasing or decreasing?
 - b. Shifting relationship(s)? Can you give me an example?
 8. What percentage of your average workweek do you allocate for soliciting, reviewing submissions, and supporting independent productions? Has that changed? How?
 9. Do you have in-house resources to support the emerging independent producers with planning, shooting, editing, audio or image capture? For example?
 10. Do you publish a set of guidelines for independent producers? If yes, how do you distribute your guidelines? If yes, could you send me a copy of your guidelines?
 11. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix F

Independent Producer Interview Questions

Tape is rolling. Date & time of interview _____. Please give me your name:

Do you agree to participate in this academic research project (title of project) and grant the author, Kathryn Larsen, the right to include your statements in her master's thesis?

This constitutes a release. Thank you.

I would like to get a little background information first.

4. Where do you live?
5. Are you a full-time filmmaker? If not, what else do you do (if you don't mind telling me)?
6. How long have you been making independent films?
7. Please tell me which PBS television station(s) you have submitted programs to?

OK, thanks, the remaining questions are part of my research project.

1. How many films have you had broadcast on public television?
2. How many films have you submitted to public television stations?
3. How many films have you produced? In how many years?
4. What would be your first distribution choice for a new project? Second? Third?
5. In the past five years do you think it has been easier or harder to submit your documentary films to public television? Why?
6. Has new digital video production and editing equipment made producing documentaries easier? How? Faster? How? Cheaper? How? Sexier? How?
7. Are you more self-sufficient as a producer/filmmaker then you were five years ago? [Not in terms of supporting yourself but in terms of producing your work] Why?
8. Do you think there is more or less competition in independent documentary production for public television today then five years ago? Why?
9. Do you think documentaries have changed in terms of acceptance in the past few years? How?
 - a. What do you think has contributed to this change?
10. What do you see as roadblocks to getting your documentaries on public television?
11. Do you get clear guidelines from public television personnel as to what they expect in terms of quality, content, and turnaround time? Please give me an example.
12. Do you have any suggestions for public television personnel that might facilitate getting more and better independent productions on air?
13. Why do you make documentary films?
14. How do you describe your audience? (In general)

Appendix G

Distribution Personnel Interview Questions

Tape is rolling. Date & time of interview.

Do you agree to participate in this academic research project (title of project) and grant the author, Kathryn Larsen, the right to include your statements in her master's thesis?
This constitutes a release. Thank you.

Please give me your name title and the company you work for.

I would like to get a little background information first.

1. What does your company do?
2. What is your location?
3. Can you tell me a little bit about what you do in your capacity as [job title]?
4. How long have you been involved in public television?

OK, thanks, the remaining questions are part of my research project. Please assume I am referring to documentary productions when I ask about independent productions.

1. Have you witnessed changes in the **quantity** of submissions in the past five years?
How? What do you attribute the changes to?
2. Has the **quality** of submitted independent productions changed over the past five years? How? What do you attribute the change(s) in quality to?
3. Of the independent productions you have received in this past year...
 - a. Approximately what percentage made it to distribution with no revisions? Can you give me an example?
 - b. Approximately what percentage needed revisions to meet broadcast standards? Example of what needed fixing?
 - c. Approximately what percentage needed revisions to the content, based upon your station policies? Can you give me an example?
 - d. Approximately what percentage were rejected?
 - e. How have these percentages changed in the past five years?
4. What effects have cheaper editing & production equipment had on the programs you receive from independent producers? Pro or con?

5. What are some of the issues you encounter with independent productions? I am specifically interested in:
 - a. Audio quality?
 - b. Video quality?
 - c. Other production issues?
 - d. Aesthetics?
 - e. Audience appeal?
 - f. Closed-captioning costs? Typically who covers this cost?
 - g. In-house costs of supporting these programs?
 - h. Any other “infrastructure” issues?
6. Has the demographic of independent producers changed in the past five years? How (in terms of race, gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic levels, etc.)?
 - a. What do you attribute the change(s) to?
 - b. Have the topics shifted and/or widened? How?
7. Do you see your companies’ involvement with independent producers changing in the next few years? How?
 - a. Increasing or decreasing?
 - b. Shifting relationship(s)? Can you give me an example?
8. What percentage of your average workweek can you allocate for soliciting, reviewing submissions, and supporting independent productions? Has that changed? How?
9. Do you have in-house resources to support the emerging independent producers with shooting, editing, audio or image capture?
10. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix H

PBS Personnel, Independent Producer and Distribution Personnel Quotes

Quotes from the interviews are categorized into three themes:

1. Democracy as it pertains to multi-vocal perspective, diversity in content, and targeting an underserved audience.
2. Accessibility in the sense that filmmakers can get their films shown on PBS stations.
3. Affordability in relation to production costs as a result of new digital technology.

Democracy

I think the doors have opened to all demographic areas. We're thrilled given the fact that Richmond, while we are the 60th largest media market overall; we are the 10th largest media market in American for African-American population. As a result we have seen great support from the African-American community. We are offering independent programs by independent producers to all of Public Television this fall, which include a program on African-American Alzheimer issues and African-American trailblazers. These are independent producers that live and work right here in our own community.

John Felton, WCVE/Richmond, VA

It's [digital technology] opened up the platform to more voices. More people whom are pursuing making programs, making documentaries, making statements, who maybe never would have access to making a film or even have thought of it.

Michael Murphy, KCPT/Kansas City, MO

Sure, topics have widened. Things that people are interested in are coming through the door in documentary form. Some of the stuff I never would have chased myself. The platform is bigger. The megaphone is bigger. People are finding they can step up if they have something to say. I think telling that story is important to people. Whether it's writing a letter to the editor or making a documentary. Our local TV critic is taking on local documentary productions.

Michael Murphy, KCPT/Kansas City, MO

I think in part because there has been a sea change in public television because of the work ITVS does. The fact there has been attention brought to the fact that independent voices were not being heard on public television.

Gayle Loeber, NETA/Columbia, SC

Non-linear editing, we did it earlier than most people – it does democratize. It makes the whole thing more democratic -- more people have access. You still have to have the talent but it does mean that those that do have some talent have an opportunity. I have a friend that is a composer who says, “Well from the music perspective in terms of being able to compose and design sound on a computer it does allow you to realize your own level of mediocrity.” One thing I have seen, though there is more opportunity to broadcast your work. There isn’t necessarily a bigger piece of a pie. Cable entities have many more hours to fill and public television with multiple digital channels to fill there is more air space than ever but there isn’t necessarily more money for acquisition fees. There is still a small window of those that can break through it. How can we make this sustainable?

Will Parrinello, San Francisco, CA

Because of working in place like ITVS, it is already skewed. If I were working at *Frontline* I would be working with a lot more male producers and probably a lot more white producers. With ITVS we are at least 50/50 men to women and we have a pretty solid demographic split in terms of ethnicity. So with us we’re not seeing a huge change in that way.

Mary Ann Thyken, ITVS

Demographics are all over the map. In the very beginning we were getting mostly projects from the Bay Area now we get films from all over the state. New filmmakers, emerging filmmakers, and some “veterans” that for whatever reason didn’t make into *Independent Lens* or *P.O.V.* or National PBS that fell through the cracks.

Rachel Raney, KQED/San Francisco, CA

I feel like there are a lot [of changes] in terms of socioeconomic backgrounds. It used to be that you needed to somehow finance yourself to be an independent filmmaker. There is still some of that; you still need to make a lifestyle change. But it does seem that it’s not the only way anymore. You don’t have to have a nest egg to spend or have a lifestyle where you are not going to have an income that is livable. I think the income is becoming more livable.

Robby Fahey, ITVS/San Francisco, CA

I believe strongly that everyone has a story to tell and I greatly enjoy giving voice to those that are not often heard in mainstream media and society. I believe for a strong informed citizenry, it is extremely helpful to understand and have knowledge of those different from yourself and documentary films are a powerful tool to provide that perspective in an engaging, educational and entertaining way.

Kathy Conkwright, Nashville, TN

The access to acquisition and off lining has allowed more people to view film and video as their set story telling device. That’s their way of telling a story whether they have professional training or not. And some really successful films have happened.

Limited technology and limited experience has created some great films. The bigger thing is that because of the prevalence of these kinds of productions, viewers have gotten accustomed to watching and reading films in a different way. Between YouTube, and different styles of documentaries people are looking at things that interest them. They are looking at niche driven things and not everything has to be shot on 16mm with a big sweeping jib arm move.

Bill Reifenberger, Crozet, VA

We all wonder what's going to happen in public television, once the technologies for distribution get resolved. I believe there will be more and more programs from independent producers. The HD format does present a challenge. A lot of producers are coming in with two versions.

Gayle Loeber, NETA/Columbia, SC

Accessibility

One of the things we noticed from the beginning there are so few slots for independent documentaries on the national schedule. *P.O.V.* has 14 slots, *Independent Lens* almost 30 but they turn down many, many films. The bar is so high; your film has to appeal to everybody from Seattle to Maine, to Florida. There all these great films from our backyard that they just don't take which gives these people some PTV audience.

Rachel Raney, KQED/San Francisco, CA

I think there are more independent producers. Independent producers as opposed to stations who actually produce 60% of what we distribute. I think there are cycles in public television and as resources go up and down and as the emphasis on localism has shifted. Right now while stations think localism is important so many of them have had to cut back so far they don't have the resources. And stations still have the perception or the mind set that they have to have a lot of production crew – 10 – 15 people. Where the independent producer has made the shift to smaller better, quicker faster smaller 1-2 production people. It's the same as when the format changed.

Gayle Loeber, NETA/Columbia, SC

We are seeing a little bit more with younger filmmakers who are attracted to the cheaper technology and have the capacity to make more things and have seen people go out and make money making documentaries. The problem for us is trying to persuade them to take their film to PBS because they are not viewers of PBS so they don't think of us.

Mary Ann Thyken, ITVS

I have rejected a number of documentaries that so clearly push an agenda that I did not feel comfortable airing them without a balancing program. In each of these cases, the bias came through the shaky production values loud and clear, so much so that I did not feel comfortable being responsible for putting them in our schedule. That is

not to say that we will not air a program that takes a position on a subject; just that the combination of poor production values and “table pounding” tilt a program into the “no thanks” category.

Kevin Crane, WNPT/Nashville, TN

We’ve also seen more independent producer offers to us because we have openly solicited the independent producer community with certain communication means and we’ve also partnered with the Virginia Film Commission. And are working on a number of projects to increase our visibility and supporting and nurturing independent producers.

John Felton, WCVE/Richmond, VA

I think the quality has improved because there is a wider range of documentaries out on the market place. I would say ten years ago people think of documentaries as something that cover the rise of Nazism or nature programs. And the rise of the political documentaries have shown people they can cover a lot of areas and then the rise of more creative documentaries like *Supersize Me* that use graphics, that used a lot of different story telling techniques. That has given people more of a sense that they can use documentaries to show a wider variety of things. They are thinking bigger. It’s not just a straight narrative; it’s a creative filmmaking process for them.

Mary Ann Thyken, ITVS/San Francisco, CA

I think one thing that has happened with all this equipment being so much more accessible. We get a lot from a first time filmmakers. Anybody can buy a camera a load Final Cut Pro and boom, boom. One thing I see a lot of with new filmmakers, or just with this new explosion of documentaries, is this idea that anything can be a film or any persons’ story will be a good film. I see a lot of things where the two or three sentences description might be intriguing but after 10 – 15 minutes its exhausted. It’s clear this person doesn’t have the charisma to support a feature length project. I see a lot of that, people not having the experience or the vision to know “yeah that really would be a good documentary.” I’ve been working in documentary so long and I hear so often “That would make a great documentary” and it really wouldn’t.

Rachel Raney, KQED/San Francisco, CA

Funding and connections to the decision makers [is a problem and the] ability for them to even see my film.

Kathy Conkwright, Nashville, TN

I think Ken Burns’ *Civil War* was a watershed in terms of documentary filmmaking. George Weil said when *Civil War* came out he said, “If there was a more important use of television he didn’t know what it was.” I think that Ken Burns took it to a new level and basically proved that a documentary that was information, educational could also be engrossingly entertainment. I think that inspired a lot, me included, to seek out stories that otherwise would not have been filmed.

Terence O’Malley, Kansas City, MO

Affordability

It doesn't automatically make your film better because you have access or finances to produce at a certain level.

Bill Reifenberger, Crozet, VA

We're somewhere between a small and mid level company. We have the same people we work with all the time but don't have them on full time. We are already acquiring in HD [high definition], editing on HD, and we're just about ready to output in High Definition. These are things that wouldn't have been possible a couple of years ago. We also now can own our own equipment, which keeps our budget in control. We don't have to rent everything out at market price. We can go out and buy a high definition camera for \$5,000, \$10,000 for all the upgrades. Anyone can get into a professional level editing system for well under \$10,000. I was doing it five years ago, but the entry point was between \$20,000 – \$40,000 where now it's \$5,000 – \$10,000.

Bill Reifenberger, Crozet, VA

Another big change has been technology and the size and ease of use, cost.

Gayle Loeber, NETA/Columbia, SC

We see more offers from new and emerging filmmakers than before. We also see more projects coming to us in a "finished" form rather than seeking production help. This is definitely a function of the reduced cost of production tools such as MiniDV cameras and computer based non-linear editors.

Kevin Crane, WNPT/Nashville, TN

Absolutely, it [the number of independent filmmakers] has probably increased by about 100% in the last five years. We attribute these changes to the advent of consumer video technology is merging to the point where its pretty close to the professional quality. And many folks who maybe five years ago didn't have the ability to produce their own locally content on a small budget now have that opportunity today. So pretty much anyone can be an independent producer.

John Felton, WCVE/Richmond, VA

When the DV technology came out we did two years of a DV initiative. I thought, let's cast the net wider and work with younger filmmakers, less experienced filmmakers with this new technology and get it done in six months and get it out there with \$125,000 or so in the budget. And we can see if we can change that format of those expensive hours that are out there. What happens, you actually need an experienced filmmaker to figure out what kind of ratio to shoot – when it's that cheap to shoot. When you have an inexperienced filmmaker they spend most of their time in the editing room because they have shot too much and they have to figure out what their story is. It curbs your discipline. Leaving the great things out – like access and

anyone able to pick up a camera and tell a story that's all wonderful – but we quickly figured out in two rounds of this idea that technology was meaningful in a lot of ways but less meaningful in term of how it affected budget. You know the budget is still the technique and what you need to do the work is all the same. The technology access both into the world they're filming but also access for new filmmakers making new films. But we saw post budgets way, way over. The money was being shifted to the edit suite.

Robby Fahey, ITVS/San Francisco, CA

I was hoping the cheaper production and editing equipment would allow people to make lower price films. On some level they can, they can turn around projects more efficiently. It has democratized it on some level. You don't have to live in a big town to be able to work on projects. And what you are seeing...they still may be in a post production situation, where they may have to post it out to do finishing work on there film. But a producer/director/editor has better chance of being able to go a whole lot further on their own. It doesn't necessarily make the films a lot cheaper because it tends to make the editing period longer. In the good 'ole days it would be a 12 week edit session and now people will come in now and say they want a year.

Mary Ann Thyken, ITVS/San Francisco, CA

I couldn't have done this film ten years ago. I can say that because I was in the business ten years ago and the memory that video consumes is so much a kilobyte hog. Video in contrast to other files just consumes – I think it's something like for every second of video it consumes 50 megabytes. So when you are talking a consumption rate like that and you've only got a 1,000 megabytes well you're not going to have very much capacity you can maybe produce short quality videos. Now today, I can load hour upon hour of raw videotape into my system and still have plenty of disk space to edit the final product. If I need more space I can always buy more 250 G is now \$350 – \$450 dollars.

Terence O'Malley, Kansas City, MO

The quantity has increased over the past five years. I attribute those changes to the fact of camera and editing equipment is much more affordable than it used to be. Allowing for more people to get their hands on it. More people are not afraid to get out there and making things. These got the gear. It used to be it took a \$70,000 to shoot a documentary and now you can do it with a \$4,000 camera and do a pretty nice job.

Michael Murphy, KCPT/Kansas City, MO

[The new technology] allows us to have the tools in our hands so that whenever we need them we have them. I'm looking at my camera now and we're planning shoots around the world on the program about environmental activism. It makes it financial possible for us to produce this series. We could not have done it if we had to rent or buy a top of the line camera. The budget just isn't there.

Will Parrinello, San Francisco, CA

Appendix I

Rhode Island PBS Independent Producer Letter of Agreement

<Date>

Dear :

Rhode Island PBS desires to broadcast (*name of program or series*). As the producer of The Program, you guarantee that you hold all television rights to The Program and that all talent and copyright fees have been paid and necessary releases granted to you. You guarantee that you are assigning all necessary rights to Rhode Island PBS for the sole purpose of broadcasting the program on all stations of Rhode Island PBS, including non-commercial cable.

Rhode Island PBS will have the rights to four (4) releases for three (3) years beginning _____. Rhode Island PBS will run The Program's credits in their entirety.

You will provide Rhode Island PBS with a list of funders and the amount of their contributions. Rhode Island PBS will not share this list with our Development Department for solicitation purposes. You will provide Rhode Island PBS with a Beta SP or DVcam copy of The Program which will be returned to you after a broadcast copy has been made. The Program must meet broadcast standards. A closed caption version is preferred.

You agree to indemnify and hold harmless Rhode Island PBS and its grantors, officers, directors, agents, employees and licensees from and against all claims, losses, costs, expenses and liabilities of every kind (whether under claims of infringement of copyright, invasion of the right of privacy, libel, slander, or claims of character), including reasonable attorney's fees and expenses arising out of or by reason of the use of the materials furnished by you or the inaccuracy or breach of any representation or warranty made by you herein; provided, however, that if any claim shall be made or action shall be taken alleging facts, which, if true, would constitute a breach of any representation or warranty of you contained herein or involving any matter conducted with the program caused by or under your control.

Rhode Island PBS shall give you prompt notice thereof and you shall have the right to join in the contest and settlement of such claim or action and may be represented by counsel chosen by Rhode Island PBS. This indemnity shall not apply to, and you shall have no liability for, any materials in the program furnished by Rhode Island PBS.

If the terms of this letter reflect your understanding of our agreement, please sign and return.

Sincerely,

Robert Fish
President & CEO

Producer

Appendix J

RFP for *Here at Home: What Unites Us? What Divides Us?* 2006 Short Film Initiative

Rhode Island Council for the Humanities (RICH) and RHODE ISLAND PBS Announce RFP for *Here at Home: What Unites Us? What Divides Us?* 2006 Short Film Initiative

Selected Proposals Receive \$1000 and Air on Rhode Island PBS

What We Are Looking For

The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities (RICH) and WSBE RHODE ISLAND PBS announce their Short Film Initiative for 2006 titled *Here at Home: What Unites Us? What Divides Us?*

Throughout 2006, occurring once a month, RICH and RHODE ISLAND PBS are organizing and broadcasting a film series reflecting on the factors that unite and divide America. The series will examine this question from several perspectives and will include both historical and contemporary events or issues (e.g. race, religion, values, gender, sexual orientation, and class)

We are seeking proposals for short videos to explore the Rhode Island angle to the issues addressed in the feature documentary. These shorts will follow the full-length film each night of the series. The videos should be original, and either researched in consultation with a scholar/expert and/or involve an interview with a scholar/expert.

Pieces should be 5 minutes in length, completely packaged and meet broadcast & FCC standards (for further explanation of these standards, please contact Kathryn Larsen at klarsen@ripbs.org). Videos should be mastered on mini-DV, DV Cam or Beta SP. Either black & white or color is acceptable.

Most genres are welcomed, including video diary, drama, comedy, animation, and mixed-genre. Completed works will be offered for broadcast on Rhode Island public television.

Films and Themes

Feature films are currently being selected for the series. To view the list of selections, please visit our website at www.ripbs.org/HereAtHome.html. Updates and changes to the schedule will be posted to the website. Screening copies of the programs are available by contacting Kathryn Larsen at klarsen@ripbs.org.

Who is Eligible

- Independent producers or independent entities producing television, film or video are encouraged to submit proposals.
- English, Media production and Communications students from Rhode Island colleges and universities are encouraged to submit proposals.
- The applicant must hold artistic, budgetary and editorial control and must own the copyright of the proposed project.

To Submit a Proposal

Please send a proposal addressing the following questions to **SueEllen Kroll, Program Officer, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, 385 Westminster Street, Suite 2, Providence, RI 02903**. Your answers should enable us to visualize the project.

Limit your proposal to 2 pages. Please number your responses.

1. Please list your name and complete contact information.
2. What film genre will your short fit into? (Documentary, animation, drama, etc)
3. Who or what is the subject of your short film? Why have you chosen this subject matter?
4. What themes do you plan to explore? Please elaborate.
5. How do you plan to tell your story? (structural elements, point of view, interviews, etc.)
6. How does your film project idea fit with the theme posed – *Here at Home: What Unites Us? What Divides Us?*
7. Do you have a scholar working with you on the project? Do you need help finding a scholar to participate in your project?
8. What is your timeline for completing your short film? Please be realistic.
9. Please attach a short bio, include any current or previous film projects.
10. Please submit a budget for your project using the attached form.

To be considered, applicants must provide a sample tape on VHS (NTSC) with their best possible work or work-in-progress that can serve as an example of the proposed project.

- Include a description of the sample and your role in the production.
- Cue the sample tape to the strongest 4-minute segment.
- Provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of your tape.
- Send a dub, not the original or master along with your proposal to RICH.

Project Parameters/Deadlines

There are four deadlines for submitting proposals:

Friday, October 14, 2005

Friday, January 13, 2006

Friday, April 14, 2006

Friday, June 14, 2006

If selected, short films must be completed 4 weeks prior to air date.

Resources and Funding

- Selected proposals will receive a \$1000 cash award upon completion of the finished film.
- Rhode Island PBS can make their studios available for interviews. Their Music Library is also available for use and some graphic assistance may be available.
- The staff of the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities can assist with locating and contacting interviewees.
- Filmmakers must have access to cameras; however, access to editing software may be arranged upon request.

Process

All recommendations regarding proposal approval will be determined by RICH and RHODE ISLAND PBS. Proposal review and notification process takes approximately six (6) weeks. Final decisions for airing the short will be made by Rhode Island PBS and RI Council for the Humanities.

Mission

The mission of the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities is to inspire and support intellectual curiosity and imagination in all Rhode Islanders through lifelong learning in the humanities.

Rhode Island PBS provides education, information, entertainment and cultural enrichment to the people of Rhode Island, in response their identified needs and interests.

Contact

Sue Ellen Kroll, Program Officer, RICH, 385 Westminster St., Ste 2, Providence, RI 02903. Email: sue@rihumanities.org Phone: 401.273.2250.